United Nations S/2017/552

Security Council

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Letter dated 23 June 2017 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey herewith the sixth report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Letter dated 23 June 2017 from the Head and the members of the Leadership Panel of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism addressed to the Secretary-General

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has the honour to transmit its sixth report pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2319 (2016).

(*Signed*) Edmond **Mulet**
Head
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism

(*Signed*) Judy **Cheng-Hopkins**
Leadership Panel

(*Signed*) Stefan **Mogl**
Leadership Panel

Enclosure

Sixth report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism

I. Introduction

1. The present sixth report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2319 (2016), covers the period following the fifth report (S/2017/131), from 11 February 2017 to 22 June 2017.

II. Background

2. As set forth in Security Council resolutions 2235 (2015) and 2319 (2016), the mandate of the Mechanism is to identify, to the greatest extent feasible, individuals, entities, groups or Governments who were perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic where an OPCW fact-finding mission determines or has determined that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical. In accordance with Security Council resolution 2319 (2016), the mandate of the Mechanism will come to an end on 16 November 2017.

3. On 25 April 2017, the President of the Security Council informed the Secretary-General (see S/2017/355) that the members of the Security Council had taken note of the intention expressed in the letter dated 21 April from the Secretary-General (S/2017/354) to appoint Edmond Mulet (Guatemala) as the new Head of the Leadership Panel of the Mechanism. He assumed his functions on 1 May, and Stefan Mogl (Switzerland) and Judy Cheng-Hopkins (Malaysia) joined as members of the Leadership Panel on 2 May and 15 June, respectively. The Head of the Panel has overall responsibility for the work of the Mechanism, including its direction, supervision and management.

4. The Leadership Panel is supported by three components: the Political Office and the Planning and Operations Support Office in New York and the Investigative Office in The Hague, Netherlands. The Investigative Office is composed of two units: the Information Collection Unit and the Analysis and Corroboration Unit. As noted in the Mechanism's fifth report, these two dedicated, complementary units were established to enhance the working methods of the Investigative Office. In addition, the Mechanism is working to redeploy a liaison officer to Damascus.

5. The Mechanism continues to implement its mandate in accordance with the methods of work outlined in its previous reports. During the first phase (information collection and planning for case development), the Mechanism reviews and analyses data, collects relevant information and elaborates an investigation plan. On the basis of the analysis carried out during the first phase and the report of the fact-finding mission, the Leadership Panel takes a decision as to whether the Mechanism will conduct an in-depth investigation into a particular incident. The second phase (case investigation) commences thereafter, during which the Mechanism undertakes an in-depth analysis of the information obtained by the fact-finding mission and from other sources, and conducts field visits and witness interviews as necessary. The second phase continues until the Mechanism is satisfied that it has gathered and assessed all information that it can obtain and, on that basis, presents its findings to the Security Council.

6. With respect to the findings of the Leadership Panel regarding the four cases referred to in the Mechanism's third and fourth reports (S/2016/738/Rev.1 and S/2016/888), if new information is provided, supplementary investigations may be undertaken to identify additional actors who were perpetrators, sponsors, organizers or otherwise involved. In the absence of additional information and noting the current time frame for investigations, the Mechanism is focusing on new cases identified by the fact-finding mission.

III. Activities

Cases under review

7. Since its fifth report, the Mechanism has reviewed two new cases identified by the fact-finding mission concerning incidents reported in Umm Hawsh, Aleppo Governorate, in September 2016, and Khan Shaykhun, Idlib Governorate, on 4 April 2017:

(a) *Umm Hawsh*. In a letter dated 4 May 2017, the Secretary-General transmitted to the President of the Security Council the "Report of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria regarding the incident of 16 September 2016, as reported in the note verbale of the Syrian Arab Republic, number 113, dated 29 November 2016" (S/2017/400, enclosure). In the conclusion of that report, the fact-finding mission confirmed that the two female casualties reported to have been involved in the incident in Umm Hawsh, Aleppo, of 16 September 2016 were exposed to sulphur mustard. Based on the Mechanism's preliminary assessment of the case, which took into account the findings of the fact-finding mission, the Leadership Panel decided to proceed with an in-depth investigation into the incident;

(b) *Khan Shaykhun*. In a letter dated 18 May, the Secretary-General transmitted to the President of the Security Council the document entitled "Note by the Technical Secretariat: status update of the OPCW fact-finding mission in Syria regarding a reported incident in Khan Shaykhun, 4 April 2017" (S/2017/440, enclosure). The status update presents the results of an analysis of samples, which indicated the presence of sarin or a sarin-like substance.

8. While taking due note that the fact-finding mission has not yet issued its report in connection with the incident in Khan Shaykhun, the Mechanism is collecting information from alternative sources in relation to the incident. The Leadership Panel will make a formal decision on conducting an in-depth investigation into the Khan Shaykhun incident once the report of the fact-finding mission has been issued.

Investigative activities

9. Regarding the incident of September 2016 in Umm Hawsh, the Mechanism has prepared an investigation plan to guide its work, including with respect to the scope of its investigation. Consistent with its mandate, the Mechanism used the determination of the fact-finding mission as a starting point for its investigation, including the information and evidence collected by the fact-finding mission, and is in the process of seeking information from a range of other sources. At this stage, these sources include the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, other States Members of the United Nations and publicly available sources.

10. The information being collected by the Mechanism includes photographs, videos and other digital information, sample analysis results, witness interviews and statements and other data. While continuing to collect relevant information and potential evidence, the Mechanism is simultaneously translating, analysing and assessing the information gathered.

11. The Mechanism has enhanced its technical and analytical capacity through engagement with several internationally recognized forensic and technical institutes, including those with geospatial expertise. These institutes have been engaged to conduct scientific analyses of material pertaining to the cases under investigation, including media files obtained by the Mechanism, in order to determine, inter alia, the authenticity of photographs and videos and to determine and/or verify specific dates and locations, which can be used for corroboration.

12. On 15 June 2017, the Mechanism addressed a formal request for information concerning the incident in Umm Hawsh to the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as relevant regional and other Member States. The request included questions related to, inter alia, the situation in and around Umm Hawsh in mid-September 2016, any chemical or chemical agent used, the means of delivery and the persons affected, including victims. Member States were also requested to provide any other information considered to be relevant to the incident. As responses to the questions are received and reviewed, the Mechanism will follow up with more specific requests and questions as may arise in the course of the investigation.

13. Regarding the incident reported in Khan Shaykhun, the Mechanism has analysed the status update of the fact-finding mission (S/2017/440, enclosure), is conducting a preliminary assessment of the information contained therein and is actively gathering and examining information from other sources pending the issuance of the report of the fact-finding mission.

Interaction with Member States and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

14. The Mechanism has continued to interact with Member States on matters relating to its mandate. Since taking up his functions on 1 May 2017, the Head of the Mechanism has met and continues to meet with Member States, including all members of the Security Council and the Syrian Arab Republic. He also regularly meets and exchanges information with the Director General of OPCW. The Mechanism continues to interact with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

15. As stated in the fourth and fifth reports of the Mechanism (S/2016/888 and S/2017/131), on 10 October 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic notified the Mechanism that the Syrian national committee had opened an internal investigation, which included a review of flight plans and air operations. On 14 October 2016, the Leadership Panel requested the Government to provide information related thereto. The Panel continues to await a response from the Syrian Arab Republic.

16. Since the issuance of its fifth report, the Mechanism has received 21 formal allegations of non-State actors' acquisition, possession, transfer or use of, or intent to use, chemical weapons or toxic chemicals. Four allegations refer specifically to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Seventeen allegations concerned the acquisition, possession and transfer of chemical weapons or toxic chemicals, as well as missiles fitted with toxic chemicals, by non-State actors, including two allegations concerning the Nusrah Front. These allegations were shared with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

United Nations counter-terrorism and non-proliferation bodies

17. As encouraged by the Security Council in its resolution 2319 (2016), the Head of the Mechanism met with the Chairs of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004); the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism; and the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida

and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. The Mechanism continues to meet with relevant experts associated with the aforementioned Committees.

IV. The way forward

18. In accordance with its mandate, the starting point of the Mechanism's investigation is the determination by the fact-finding mission that a specific incident in the Syrian Arab Republic involved or likely involved the use of chemicals as weapons. The fact-finding mission is continuing investigations into other alleged incidents of the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Leadership Panel will review any determinations of use of chemicals as weapons by the fact-finding mission, with a view to considering whether the Mechanism may investigate these incidents.

19. The Mechanism is gathering all relevant information concerning the two reported incidents involving the use of chemicals as weapons in Umm Hawsh and Khan Shaykhun in the Syrian Arab Republic. Member States, as well as international organizations, non-governmental organizations, other entities and individuals in possession of information relating to these incidents, are encouraged to approach the Mechanism and share such information at the earliest opportunity. The Mechanism continues to adhere to strict standards for the protection of confidential information.

20. The Leadership Panel reminds the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties in the country, as well as other Member States, that the investigation depends on the quality of information shared with the Mechanism and that its outcomes are tied to the timely receipt of such information.

V. Concluding remarks

21. The Leadership Panel resolutely condemns the use of chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. These deliberate, insidious acts of poisoning must stop. The international community has worked tirelessly to eradicate chemical weapons through the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993. We cannot allow these gains to be lost.

22. The Leadership Panel is concerned by unfortunate attempts to politicize the work of the Mechanism and is aware that various stakeholders hold views on how the investigation should be conducted in order to generate confidence in its outcomes. The Panel and the entire staff of the Mechanism remain committed to fully implementing its mandate in an independent, impartial and objective manner.

23. It is the hope of the Leadership Panel that its work, building on that of the previous Panel, may serve as an active deterrent to any further use of chemical weapons. To that end, the Mechanism will identify, to the greatest extent feasible, those involved in the use of such weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, so that they may be brought to account.

24. The Leadership Panel wishes to thank the Member States for their continued expressions of support for the work of the Mechanism, including through contributions to its voluntary trust fund. The Panel also wishes to thank the United Nations Secretariat, in particular the Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the OPCW Technical Secretariat for their continued support for the functioning of the Mechanism.

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The Security Council,

Reaffirming all its previous resolutions and presidential statements concerning the situation in Sudan and underlining the importance of full compliance with these,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of Sudan and its determination to work with the Government of Sudan, in full respect of its sovereignty, to assist in tackling the various challenges in Sudan,

Recalling the importance of the principles of the peaceful settlement of international disputes, good neighbourliness, non-interference and cooperation in the relations among States in the region,

Reaffirming the basic principles of peacekeeping, including consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force, except in self-defence and defence of the mandate, and recognizing that the mandate of each peacekeeping mission is specific to the country concerned, and *recalling* S/PRST/2015/22,

Recalling all its relevant resolutions on women, peace and security, on children and armed conflicts, on the protection of humanitarian and United Nations personnel, and on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts,

Underlining, without prejudice to the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the importance of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with regard to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa, particularly in Sudan,

Current situation

Welcoming the reduction of military confrontations between Government forces and rebel groups and the announcement of unilateral cessation of hostilities by the Government of Sudan until June 2017 and by the Sudan Liberation Army Minni Minnawi (SLA/MM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM)/Gibril until November 2017,

Expressing concern at the presence of Darfur armed movements in conflict areas outside Sudan; *expressing further concern* at the recent clashes in north and east Darfur, *condemning* the violations of unilateral cessations of hostilities and

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urging all parties to abide by their unilateral cessation of hostilities and to immediately agree to a permanent ceasefire,

Reiterating its demand that all parties to the conflict in Darfur immediately end violence, including attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel,

Welcoming the overall improvement in security conditions, *expressing concern* that the overall security situation in Darfur remains precarious due to activities of militia groups, the incorporation of some militias into auxiliary units of the Government of Sudan forces, which have become key actors in the conflict between the Government of Sudan and the armed movements and in inter-communal conflict and further exacerbate insecurity and threats against civilians in Darfur, the prevalence of weapons, which contributes to large scale violence and is undermining the establishment of the rule of law, acts of banditry and criminality and the absence of rule of law,

Noting that inter-communal conflicts remain one of the main sources of violence in Darfur and *expressing concern* at ongoing inter-communal conflict over land, access to resources, migration issues and tribal rivalries, including with the involvement of paramilitary units and tribal militias, as well as at the persistence of attacks against civilians, sexual and gender-based violence and that crucial grievances that caused the conflict remain unaddressed,

Welcoming the increased presence of the Sudanese Police in Darfur, as compared to previous years, *urging* the Government of Sudan to continue to increase the number and presence of police in Darfur, *underlining* the importance of effective police and rule of law institutions to establishing a protective environment and combating impunity in line with international human rights standards and *noting* that whilst the Sudanese Police have increased their presence in Darfur, they lack capacity to fully cover all the localities and protect communities and that the presence and capacity of justice and corrections institutions across Darfur is limited and impunity for serious crimes remains widespread, *acknowledging* efforts by the local governments to restore law and order through the deployment of additional police, corrections and judicial human and material resources across Darfur, *noting* that these efforts should be consolidated and expanded to enhance the protective environment for the civilian population, without any discrimination, particularly with respect to violations and abuses of women's rights and sexual and gender-based violence as well as violations and abuses against children and *recalling* the importance of national political leadership towards that goal,

Emphasising that those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights must be held accountable and that the Government of Sudan bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, including protection from crimes against humanity and war crimes,

Recalling its resolution 2117 (2013) and *expressing concern* at the threat to peace and security in Darfur arising from the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, and the continued threats to civilians posed by unexploded ordnance,

Humanitarian situation and displacement

Whilst welcoming the reduction in the levels of new displacement in the first quarter of 2017, *expressing deep concern* at the increase in displacement in 2016, when armed conflict triggered the displacement of over 140,000 people, and of an additional 40,000 who were displaced and subsequently returned to their places of

origin, with thousands more reported to be displaced but which could not be verified due to access constraints, increasing the estimated total number of long-term internally-displaced persons (IDPs) in Darfur to 2.7 million and a total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance of 2.1 million,

Calling on donors, the regional authorities in Darfur and the Government of Sudan to provide the financial resources necessary to reach those in need, including to the United Nations Country Team, and to undertake development activities in support of the transition to peacebuilding, and *urging* the Government of Sudan and the local authorities to ensure there is an environment conducive to the provision of such activities, including improving access for development actors,

Noting some improvements in the protective environment, *expressing concern* that IDPs continue to face grave security challenges including being killed, raped, or harassed as they conduct life-sustaining activities outside the camps and at the increase in human rights violations and abuses in 2016 and the first quarter in 2017 and the worrying levels of conflict-related sexual and gender based violence and grave violations against children,

Underlining the importance of the Government of Sudan addressing the root causes of conflict and extending state authority, including through the strengthening of the rule of law and respect for human rights, throughout Darfur in order to make the transition to peacebuilding possible,

Expressing concern that the humanitarian and security situation, as well as the lack of capacity of the regional authorities in Darfur, hinder the transition from relief to stabilisation and development activities, *urging* the Government of Sudan, with the support of interested donors, to ensure that the Darfur Peace Follow-up Office is properly resourced in order to continue implementation of the work of the former Darfur Regional Authority and the Commissions, *urging* donors and the Government of Sudan to honour their pledges and fulfil their obligations in a timely manner, including those commitments made at the conference in Doha in April 2013, *affirming* that development can support a lasting peace in Darfur, and *calling on* donors to support the Darfur Development Strategy and ensure their funding is adequately aligned to Darfur's current development needs,

Recalling the commitments made by the Government of Sudan and other signatories to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) to ensure the unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to the population in need and the protection of humanitarian workers and their operations in areas under their control, as well as to guarantee the United Nation-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) unimpeded freedom of movement in all areas and at all times in Darfur in the exercise of its mandate, and *further recalling* the role of the Implementation Follow-up Commission (IFC) in assessing the implementation of the DDPD,

Operational Challenges

Welcoming the improvement in freedom of movement for UNAMID and humanitarian personnel as well as in the issuance of visas for UNAMID staff and the processing of UNAMID containers, but *expressing concern* that restrictions remain in place, including restrictions from the Government of Sudan on the conduct of night patrols all over Darfur and restrictions preventing UNAMID from reaching areas where there are instances of inter-communal conflict in a timely fashion, and that obstacles, including bureaucratic obstacles, imposed on UNAMID continue to jeopardise its ability to deliver on its mandate, including visa restrictions targeted at some elements of UNAMID, particularly the human rights section, and ongoing delays in the processing of UNAMID containers, *recognising* the Government of Sudan's commitment to cooperate with UNAMID and

humanitarian personnel on all logistical issues and *calling on* the Government of Sudan to continuously honour its commitment in full to ensure that humanitarian personnel and UNAMID can operate in support of addressing basic needs,

Political situation

Reiterating that there can be no military solution to the conflict in Darfur, and that an inclusive political settlement is essential to re-establishing peace, and *underscoring* the importance of fully addressing the root causes of the conflict, including management of land, water and other resources, and the perceived bias by the Government of Sudan towards one group over another, in the search for a sustainable peace, which should rapidly deliver real benefits for the Darfuri people, in this regard *reiterating* its support for the DDPD as a viable framework for the peace process in Darfur, and for its accelerated implementation, as well as the implementation of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AU-HIP) Roadmap and mediated peace talks,

Welcoming the signing of the AU-HIP Roadmap by the Government of Sudan and the armed movements, *urging* all parties to make immediate progress on the implementation of the Roadmap, including the signing of cessation of hostilities and humanitarian assistance agreements among the parties consistent with the first phase of the Roadmap, and *further urging* non-signatory groups to sign it without delay,

Acknowledging the progress of the Sudan National Dialogue in October 2016, including the adoption of a national document and the subsequent appointment of the First Vice President as Prime Minister and formation of a Government of National Unity, and *noting* that major opposition groups in Sudan have not yet participated in the National Dialogue out of concerns that the process being conducted was taking place in an adverse political and human rights climate, *noting* that the Government of Sudan has expressed openness for outstanding opposition groups to join the National Dialogue process and *encouraging* the Government of Sudan to create a more inclusive environment that would enable outstanding opposition groups to contribute to this process, including by contributing to modalities on implementing the recommendations agreed in the national document and to join the National Dialogue process in the drafting of a new constitution,

Noting that UNAMID's ability to facilitate progress in implementation of the DDPD is hampered by delays and the absence of an inclusive political settlement between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements,

Noting that local dispute resolution mechanisms play an important role in preventing and resolving inter-communal conflict, including conflict over natural resources, *urging* an intensification of effective efforts to prevent local disputes leading to violence, with its corresponding impact on the local civilian populations, *acknowledging* the efforts of Sudanese authorities, with the support of UNAMID, and efforts of the United Nations Country Team, particularly through the Darfur Community Peace and Stability Fund (DCPSF), in this regard, *welcoming* the encouraging conclusion of several inter-communal peace agreements, with support from UNAMID and the United Nations Country Team, and *urging* their continued work in collaboration with the Government of Sudan to find sustainable solutions to these conflicts,

Welcoming regional and other initiatives, undertaken in close interaction with the Government of Sudan, to address the root causes of the conflict in Darfur and to promote a sustainable peace, *commending* the efforts of the AU-HIP, led by President Thabo Mbeki and the efforts of the Joint Special Representative (JSR) to secure peace, stability and security in Darfur, including through support to

international, regional and national efforts to revitalise the peace process and increase its inclusiveness,

Calling on all parties to comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, *stressing* the importance that the Council attaches to ending impunity including through ensuring accountability and bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes, including sexual and gender-based violence, committed by all parties in Darfur, *urging* the Government of Sudan to comply with its obligations in this respect, *welcoming* the ongoing investigations by the Special Prosecutor for Darfur appointed by the Government of Sudan, particularly with respect to cases of sexual and gender based violence, and *stressing* the need for further progress in this regard with respect to perpetrators on all sides, *reiterating* the call for swift progress on the draft Memorandum of Understanding providing for UNAMID and African Union observation of the proceedings of the Special Court, and *calling on* the Government of Sudan swiftly to investigate attacks against UNAMID, and to bring the perpetrators to justice,

Reaffirming its concern over the negative effect of instability in Darfur on the stability of Sudan as a whole as well as the region, and *encouraging* cooperation between regional state actors to address cross-border issues, such as weapons smuggling, in order to achieve peace and stability in Darfur and the wider region, and *recalling* in this regard the arms embargo as contained in paragraph 9 of resolution 1556 (2004) and paragraph 7 of resolution 1591 (2005), as updated in paragraph 9 of resolution 1945 (2010) and paragraph 4 of resolution 2035 (2012),

Commending the efforts of UNAMID towards promoting peace and stability in Darfur, and *reiterating* its full support for UNAMID,

Welcoming the Special Report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission of 18 May 2017 (S/2017/437) (the Special Report) and the Report of the Secretary-General of 14 June 2017 on UNAMID,

Determining that the situation in Sudan constitutes a threat to international peace and security,

1. *Decides* to extend until 30 June 2018 the mandate of UNAMID;

2. *Takes note of* the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Commission in the Special Report, *supports* the recommendation for a two-pronged approach, which focuses on military protection, explosive remnants of war clearance and emergency relief in the Jebel Marra area and, in other areas of Darfur where there has not been recent fighting, an approach that focuses on stabilising the situation, supporting the police and helping to build rule of law institutions whilst continuing to protect civilians, mediating intercommunal conflict and following up on security sector reform-related issues as provided in the DDPD and guided by the African Union Security Sector Reform Framework, and the implementation of the DDPD;

3. *Underlines* the need to keep the situation in all areas of Darfur under review, to conduct regular reviews of the geographic deployment of UNAMID's force and to maintain the flexibility within UNAMID to respond to developments throughout Darfur as the situation requires;

4. *Underlines* that the reconfiguration of UNAMID has to be effectively mitigated by an improved ability to respond to threats quickly and adequately;

5. *Decides* that, in line with these recommendations, from the date of adoption of this resolution until six months thereafter ("phase one"), UNAMID's authorised ceiling for troops and police shall be reduced to consist of up to 11,395

military personnel, 2,888 police personnel including individual police officers and members of formed police units;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Commission, in consultation with UNAMID, to provide a written assessment by 1 January 2018 on the following:

(i) progress in implementing phase one of the reconfiguration recommended in the Special Report;

(ii) the impact of the phase one reductions on the areas that UNAMID has withdrawn from, including protection needs, violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, and the ability for relief actors to provide humanitarian assistance;

(iii) the Government of Sudan's cooperation with UNAMID, including ensuring that UNAMID has unfettered freedom of movement and the ability to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Darfur and the flexibility to open and close UNAMID operating bases, as necessary, including the establishment of a temporary operating base in Golo, and the ability for UNAMID's mandated forces to return, without impediments or obstacles, to areas throughout Darfur, including to areas that it has withdrawn from;

(iv) the removal of bureaucratic hindrances to UNAMID, including with regard to customs clearances and visas;

(v) whether the conditions on the ground remain conducive to further reductions;

7. *Decides*, from 31 January 2018, to further reduce UNAMID's troop and police ceiling, taking into account the recommendations in the Special Report ("phase two"), and that by 30 June 2018, UNAMID's authorised ceiling for troops and police shall be reduced to consist of up to 8,735 military personnel and 2,500 police personnel including individual police officers and members of formed police units, unless the Security Council decides, taking into account the findings of the assessment requested in paragraph six of this Resolution, to adjust the scope and pace of the reduction;

8. *Stresses* that, in the context of the evolving security situation, any further refinement of the Mission should be based on progress against the benchmarks and the conditions on the ground, and implemented in a gradual, phased, flexible and reversible manner, and that a reduction in the uniformed component should preserve the hybrid nature of the Mission and should prioritise the retention of the highest performing contingents;

9. *Welcomes* the intention to conduct a comprehensive Civilian Staffing Review of UNAMID to ensure that staffing levels are adjusted to implement the revised mandate and *underlines* the need for appropriate staffing levels in accordance with the reconfiguration of UNAMID, including the increased focus on stabilising the situation in Darfur;

10. *Reaffirms* that UNAMID's strategic priorities, as set out in resolution 2296 (2016) are:

(a) The protection of civilians, the facilitation of humanitarian assistance and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel;

(b) Mediation between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the DDPD, while taking into account ongoing democratic transformation at the national level;

(c) Support for the mediation of inter-communal conflict, including through measures to address its root causes, in conjunction with the Government of Sudan, the United Nations Country Team and civil society;

11. *Requests* that UNAMID continue to align all its activity and direct the use of its resources to the achievement of these priorities, discontinue all other tasks not aligned to these priorities and continue to streamline the Mission accordingly, *requests* all components of the UNAMID Force, police and civilian components to work together in an integrated way, *encourages* UNAMID the United Nations Country Team and other United Nations entities operating in Darfur to strengthen integration and *stresses* the importance of the appropriate distribution of tasks and coordination between UNAMID and the United Nations Country Team;

12. *Reaffirms* that UNAMID must continue to give priority in decisions about the use of available capacity and resources to: (a) the protection of civilians across Darfur; and (b) ensuring safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and activities, in accordance with relevant provisions of international law and the United Nations guiding principles on humanitarian assistance; and *requests* UNAMID to maximise the use of its capabilities, in cooperation with the United Nations Country Team and other international and non-governmental actors, in the implementation of its mission-wide comprehensive strategy for the achievement of these objectives;

13. *Stresses* the need for coordination and cooperation between the Government of Sudan, including local authorities, United Nations entities and development actors to work together, including to stabilise and improve the security situation and assist in restoration of State authority;

14. *Decides*, acting under Chapter VII, to extend the authorizations to take the necessary action set out in paragraph 15 of resolution 1769 (2007), as further elaborated in paragraph 15 of this resolution; and *urges* UNAMID to deter any threats against itself and its mandate;

15. *Decides* that the mandate of UNAMID will include the following tasks:

(a) Protection of civilians, facilitation of humanitarian assistance and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel:

(i) Without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Sudanese authorities to protect civilians, to protect civilians across Darfur, including women and children, through, inter alia, continuing to move to a more preventative and pre-emptive posture in pursuit of its priorities and in active defence of its mandate; enhanced early warning; proactive military deployment and active and effective patrolling in areas at high risk of conflict and high concentration of IDPs; more prompt and effective responses to threats of violence against civilians, including through regular reviews of the geographic deployment of UNAMID's force; securing IDP camps, adjacent areas and areas of return;

(ii) To identify and report threats to and attacks against civilians and implement prevention and response plans and strengthen civil-military cooperation;

(iii) To fully implement and deliver, in close consultation with humanitarian partners and other relevant partners, the Mission-wide protection of civilians strategy;

(iv) To support, in coordination with the Government of Sudan, the capacity-building of the Government of Sudan police in Darfur, including the development and training of community policing, including on providing

security in IDP camps and along migration routes, in accordance with international standards of human rights and accountability;

(v) To monitor through proactive patrolling policing activities in camps for internally displaced persons;

(vi) To provide technical mine-action advice and coordination and demining capacity in support of national institutions;

(vii) To assist in the implementation of the provisions of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the DDPD and any subsequent agreements relating to human rights and the rule of law and to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to respect for human rights, accountability, and the rule of law, in which all are ensured effective protection, including through monitoring and reporting on human rights, and support to institutional development, advocacy with the authorities and increased capacity building to strengthen transitional justice and human rights institutions, including the Special Court for Darfur, and through supporting the establishment of criminal justice institutions and rural courts through the provision of advice and logistical support in areas of Darfur that are key to the voluntary return of displaced populations to address land disputes and other inter-communal conflict drivers;

(viii) Support the Government of Sudan and local government authorities in extending state authority throughout Darfur through the provision of technical and logistical support to local conflict resolution mechanisms, as a means to reduce inter-communal conflict, enhance accountability and create conditions conducive to voluntary return of displaced populations;

(ix) To ensure an adequate human rights, child protection and gender presence, capacity, and expertise in Darfur in order to contribute to efforts to protect and promote human rights in Darfur, with particular attention to vulnerable groups;

(x) To monitor, verify, and draw to the attention of the authorities abuses and violations of human rights, including those committed against women and children, and violations of international humanitarian law and enhanced, detailed, full and public reporting by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on this issue as part of his regular 60 day reports;

(xi) To support the implementation of provisions included in the Darfur Peace Agreement, the DDPD and any subsequent agreements relating to upholding the rights of women and children;

(xii) To facilitate the effective and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance and full access to people in need;

(xiii) To contribute to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance and to facilitate the voluntary and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs to their homes, and support the Government in finding sustainable solution for the voluntary return of IDPs in line with international standards;

(xiv) In the areas of its deployment and within its capabilities, to protect the hybrid operation's personnel, facilities, installations and equipment, to ensure the security and freedom of movement of United Nations-African Union personnel and humanitarian workers;

(b) Mediation between Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements:

(i) To support the AU-HIP-led peace process in Sudan, in coordination and collaboration with the Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan, including the negotiations on cessation of hostilities and humanitarian access in Darfur;

(ii) To support and monitor the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the DDPD and subsequent agreements;

(iii) To advise on the complementary implementation of all peace agreements in Darfur, particularly with regard to the national provisions of those agreements, and compliance with the Interim National Constitution;

(iv) To support the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the DDPD and any subsequent agreements, with particular focus on the provisions related to returns, internal dialogue, justice, reconciliation and land, within its capacities, including through the provision of technical assistance and logistical support to the residual bodies of the Darfur Regional Authority;

(v) To assist in harnessing the capacity of women to participate in the peace process, including through political representation, economic empowerment and protection from gender-based violence;

(c) Support to the mediation of inter-communal conflict including measures to address root causes:

(i) To support the mediation of inter-communal conflict, including through supporting local conflict resolution mechanisms by working with the Government of Sudan, tribal and militia leaders, the United Nations Country Team and civil society, to develop an action plan on the prevention and resolution of inter-communal conflict in each state of Darfur, including resolving the underlying drivers of inter-communal conflict such as land, access to resources, migration issues and tribal rivalries;

(ii) To support the implementation of a legal and institutional framework to address the root causes of conflict, including land issues, access to resources, migration issues and tribal rivalries, including with the involvement of paramilitary units and tribal militia;

(iii) To assist all stakeholders and local government authorities, in particular in their efforts to transfer resources in an equitable manner from the federal Government to the Darfur states, and to implement reconstruction plans and existing and subsequent agreements on land use and compensation issues;

(iv) To support the implementation of the Darfur Internal Dialogue and Consultation (DIDC), including through encouraging their inclusion in the constitutional review process;

16. *Stresses* the importance of adequate resourcing for the United Nations Country Team to provide support as highlighted in this resolution and *encourages* Member States and relevant organisations to consider providing the necessary voluntary funding;

17. *Welcomes* efforts to increase the effectiveness of UNAMID, and in this regard, *underlines* that UNAMID should ensure a higher degree of flexibility in its military deployments throughout Darfur and enhance the field presence of individual police officers and *calls on* the Secretary-General to ensure that Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and Statements of Unit Requirements (SURs) between UNAMID troop- and police-contributing countries and the United Nations reflect this need;

18. *Requests* UNAMID to ensure that any support provided to non-United Nations security forces is provided in strict compliance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces (HRDDP), and requests the Secretary-General to include progress made in implementing the policy in his reports to the Security Council;

19. *Urges* close coordination among United Nations missions in the region, including UNAMID, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), and *requests* the Secretary-General to ensure effective inter-mission cooperation;

Political Situation

20. *Commends* the efforts of the JSR to revitalise the peace process and to increase its inclusiveness, guided by the Framework for African Union and United Nations facilitation of the Darfur Peace Process, including through renewed engagement of the non-signatory movements; *welcomes* the JSR's strengthened coordination with the AU-HIP and the United Nations Special Envoy for Sudan and South Sudan in synchronising their mediation efforts and in generating progress on direct negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements;

21. *Welcomes* that progress has been made in implementation of elements of the DDPD, including the accession of SLM-Second Revolution to the Document, the integration of former rebels into power structures of Sudan and the ongoing DIDC, but *expresses concern* at continuing delays in implementation overall, including provisions related to compensation and the creation of a conducive environment enabling the return of IDPs and refugees; *urges* the signatory parties to implement the DDPD in full, *acknowledges* the establishment of the Darfur Peace Follow Up Office in place of the Darfur Regional Authority and *urges* the Government and signatory parties to ensure that the institutions established under it are resourced and empowered to carry out their mandates; *demands* that the non-signatory armed movements refrain from impeding the implementation of the DDPD; and *encourages* UNAMID and the United Nations Country Team to continue to engage fully in support of implementation of the DDPD;

22. *Takes note of* the conclusion of the most recent phase of the National Dialogue in October 2016 and the formation of a new Government in May 2017, including the appointment of the First Vice-President as Prime Minister, *encourages* the Government of Sudan to support an environment that is conducive to the participation of the opposition in political processes, including the implementation of National Dialogue recommendations in an inclusive manner;

23. *Emphasizes* the importance of the work of the AU-HIP, *encourages* all parties to the conflict to engage constructively with the AU-HIP to implement the AU-HIP Roadmap in full and in this regard *condemns* the attitude of those who refuse to join the mediation process, including the Sudan Liberation Army Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW), *urges* the SLA/AW to join the peace process, without preconditions, in order to achieve a cessation of hostilities as a first step towards a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement; *expresses its intention* to consider imposing additional measures against any party that impedes the peace process;

24. *Reaffirms* its support for a Darfur-based internal dialogue that takes place in an inclusive environment with full respect for the civil and political rights of participants, including the full and effective participation of women and IDPs;

25. *Calls* for an urgent end to inter-communal conflict, criminality and banditry that affect civilians, *acknowledges* efforts of Sudanese authorities and local mediators to mediate in inter-communal conflict; *further calls* for reconciliation and dialogue, *underlines* the need for sustainable solutions to the root causes of inter-communal conflict, and *welcomes* UNAMID's intention to intensify its efforts to support the mediation of inter-communal conflict within the framework of its mandate and strategic priorities;

Security

26. *Demands* that all parties to the conflict in Darfur immediately cease all acts of violence, and commit themselves to a sustained and permanent ceasefire, in order to bring a stable and durable peace to the region;

27. *Demands* that the parties to the conflict immediately cease all acts of sexual and gender-based violence and make and implement specific and time-bound commitments to combat sexual violence, in accordance with resolution 2106 (2013); *urges* the Government of Sudan, with the support of the United Nations and the African Union, to develop a structured framework through which conflict related sexual violence will be comprehensively addressed, to cooperate with UNAMID to enable comprehensive reporting of and response to incidents of sexual and gender based violence, allow access for service provision for sexual violence survivors and hold perpetrators accountable; *requests* UNAMID to strengthen its reporting on sexual and gender-based violence and actions taken to combat it, including through the swift deployment of Women Protection Advisers; *requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the relevant provisions of resolutions 1325 (2000), 2242 (2015), and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, are implemented, including supporting the full and effective participation of women during all stages of peace processes, particularly in conflict resolution, post-conflict planning and peacebuilding, including women's civil society organisations, and to include information on this in his reporting to the Council; *further requests* UNAMID to monitor and assess the implementation of these tasks and *requests* the Secretary-General to include information on this in his reporting to the Council;

28. *Demands* that the parties to the conflict immediately cease all violations and abuses against children and that the Government of Sudan hold perpetrators accountable; *welcomes* the adoption and the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan for the Protection of Children from violations in armed conflict, to *inter alia* end child recruitment and use in its armed and security forces, signed by the Government of Sudan in March 2016, and *urges* SLA/MM and JEM/Gibril to expedite the implementation of their respective Action Plans to end child recruitment and use in full, *urges* all parties to the conflict to implement the conclusions on Children and Armed Conflict agreed by the Security Council Working Group on Armed Conflict, adopted on 22 June 2017; and *requests* the Secretary-General to ensure:

(a) continued monitoring and reporting of the situation of children in Darfur including through the deployment of Child Protection Advisers and *requests* the Secretary-General to include information on this in his reporting to the Council; and

(b) continued dialogue with the parties to the conflict towards the development and implementation of the aforementioned action plans, in accordance with resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on children and armed conflict;

29. *Strongly condemns* all killings resulting from inter-communal conflicts and other attacks against civilians, *recognizes* that local/traditional dispute mechanisms have their limitations in addressing serious criminal and human rights

abuses resulting from inter-communal conflicts and violence such as mass killings, injuries, destruction of property and livelihoods, and *notes* the recurrent nature of these inter-communal conflicts and the threat to civilian protection, peace and stability, *urges* the Government of Sudan, with the support of UNAMID and the United Nations Country Team, to address the ongoing impunity through ensuring accountability for human rights abuses and violations in situations of inter-communal conflicts in Darfur as well as attacks perpetrated by militias;

30. *Expresses deep concern* over the proliferation of arms, in particular small arms and light weapons and the use of such arms against civilians, including by militia, *requests* UNAMID to continue to cooperate in this context with the Panel of Experts established by resolution 1591 (2005) in order to facilitate their work, and *encourages* UNAMID to continue to provide technical and logistical assistance to the Sudan DDR Commission and *urges* the Government of Sudan to conduct a genuine and comprehensive disarmament process, in full cooperation with UNAMID;

Humanitarian situation and displacement

31. *Condemns* all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including those involving any form of sexual and gender-based violence, in particular the deliberate targeting of civilians, indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks; and *demands* that all parties in Darfur immediately end attacks targeting civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian personnel, and comply with their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law as applicable and that the Government of Sudan hold perpetrators accountable;

32. *Expresses serious concern* at the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and at the threats to and attacks on humanitarian personnel and facilities; *acknowledges* improvements in humanitarian access resulting by the Directives issued by the Humanitarian Aid Commission in December 2016 but *expresses concern that* these are not being implemented in full; *welcomes* that humanitarian organizations have been able to expand support to new populations, and *expresses concern* that access to some conflict areas where vulnerable populations reside remains restricted, that some conflict areas are inaccessible, and at ongoing restrictions on humanitarian access in some parts of Darfur due to insecurity, acts of criminality, movement restrictions by Government forces, militia groups, and armed movements, attacks against humanitarian workers, denial of access by the parties to the conflict and bureaucratic impediments imposed by the Government of Sudan;

33. *Expresses concern* over the insufficient availability of funding for humanitarian actors; *stresses* the need for the timely issuing of visas and travel permits for humanitarian organisations, the rapid processing of technical agreements and reduced restrictions on recruitment and employment of personnel and the selection of partners; and *demands* that the Government of Sudan, all militia groups, including auxiliary units of the Government of Sudan forces, armed movements and all other stakeholders ensure the safe, timely and unhindered access of humanitarian organisations and relief personnel, and the delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need throughout Darfur, in accordance with the relevant provisions of international law and United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

34. *Condemns* increased human rights violations and abuses in, and relating to, Darfur, including those involving extrajudicial killings, the excessive use of force, abduction of civilians, acts of sexual and gender-based violence, violations and abuses against children, and arbitrary arrests and detentions; *calls on* the

Government of Sudan to investigate allegations of such violations and abuses and bring those responsible to justice; *expresses deep concern* about the situation of all those so detained, including civil society members, IDPs and a UNAMID human rights monitor; *emphasizes* the importance of ensuring, within its current mandate, UNAMID's and other relevant organisations' ability to monitor such cases and in this regard *urges* the Government of Sudan to extend full cooperation to UNAMID towards fulfilment of this goal and to provide accountability and access to justice for victims; *calls on* the Government of Sudan fully to respect its obligations, including by fulfilling its commitment to lift the state of emergency in Darfur, releasing all political prisoners, ensuring free expression and ensuring UNAMID monitors' access and freedom of movement, including by refraining from arresting and detaining UNAMID staff;

35. *Notes* the Government of Sudan's stated desire to see the displaced return to their areas of origin or resettle in their current areas of displacement; *stresses* that any returns should be safe, voluntary and in accordance with applicable international law; and further *stresses* the importance of achieving dignified and durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, and of ensuring their full participation in the planning and management of these solutions;

36. *Demands* that all parties to the conflict in Darfur create the conditions conducive to allowing the voluntary, informed, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees and IDPs, or, where appropriate, their local integration or relocation to a third location and within the context of its protection of civilians mandate, *welcomes* UNAMID's plan for renewed effort to enhance the protection of IDPs; *stresses* the need for the establishment of a mechanism in order to verify the extent to which these returns are voluntary and informed in nature, and *underlines* the importance of addressing land issues for the realisation of durable solutions in Darfur;

Operational Challenges

37. *Strongly condemns* all attacks on UNAMID; *underlines* that any attack or threat of attack on UNAMID is unacceptable; *demands* that there be no recurrence of such attacks and that those responsible be held to account following prompt and thorough investigation; *pays tribute* to the UNAMID personnel who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty for the cause of peace in Darfur; *urges* UNAMID to take all necessary measures within its rules of engagement to protect United Nations personnel and equipment; *condemns* the ongoing impunity for those who attack peacekeepers, and in this regard *urges* the Government of Sudan to do its utmost to bring all perpetrators of any such crimes to justice and to cooperate with UNAMID to this end;

38. *Acknowledges* recent improvements in the issuance of visas and the clearance of UNAMID shipments, freedom of movement and the processing of travel documents, *reiterates* its concern that hindrances remain to UNAMID in the implementation of its mandate, including that some elements of UNAMID, particularly the human rights section, continue to suffer from targeted visa restrictions, ongoing delays in the processing of UNAMID containers, movement and access restrictions, caused by insecurity, acts of criminality and significant movement restrictions by the Government of Sudan, militia groups and armed movements, including restrictions from the Government of Sudan on the conduct of night patrols all over Darfur and other restrictions preventing UNAMID from reaching areas where there are instances of inter-communal conflict in a timely fashion; *calls on* all parties in Darfur to remove all obstacles to UNAMID's full and proper discharge of its mandate, including by ensuring its security and freedom of movement; and in this regard, *demands* that the Government of Sudan,

communicating and collaborating closely with its various agencies and all levels of local government bodies, recommit to and comply with the Status of Forces Agreement fully and without delay, particularly provisions relevant to the movement of patrols in conflict-affected areas and flight clearances, as well as those provisions relevant to the removal of obstacles to the use of UNAMID aerial assets, the timely processing of UNAMID's equipment and rations at the port of entry to Sudan, and the timely issuing of visas;

Exit strategy

39. *Underscores* the importance of regular review by the Security Council of each United Nations peacekeeping mission's progress in implementing its mandate, *takes note* of the Secretary-General's efforts to make recommendations on the future of UNAMID, including its exit strategy, as requested by the Security Council in paragraph 7 of resolution 2173 (2014); *concurs* that UNAMID's long-term planning should be based upon progress towards the Mission's benchmarks as set out in the Secretary-General's report of 16 October 2012 (S/2012/771) and subsequently refined in his reports of 25 February 2014 (S/2014/138) and 15 April 2014 (S/2014/279) (Annex), *underlines* that the reconfiguration of UNAMID decided in this resolution aims to make progress towards the fulfilment of these benchmarks; and *takes note* that the Secretary-General, in his report of 26 May 2015 (S/2015/378), emphasizes that a political settlement in Darfur and direct talks between Government and the non-signatory armed movements, starting with a cessation of hostilities in Darfur, is essential to re-establishing peace in Darfur and is primary to the achievement of these benchmarks;

40. *Takes note of* consultations between the United Nations, the African Union and the Government of Sudan, notably in the frameworks of the Tripartite mechanism and the Joint Working Group over the past year, including discussion of operational and logistical issues pertaining to the Mission's operation as well as the development of an exit strategy in accordance with the Mission's benchmarks;

Reporting

41. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Council every 60 days following adoption of this resolution on UNAMID, including:

(i) information on the political, humanitarian and security situation in Darfur, including detailed reporting on incidents of violence and attacks against civilians, including sexual and gender-based violence, by whomsoever perpetrated;

(ii) information on violations of the Status of Forces Agreement, including those involving attacks or threats of attack on UNAMID, violations of international humanitarian law perpetrated by any party to the conflict, as well as access restrictions and significant operational obstacles such as those related to customs clearances and visas;

(iii) developments and progress towards achievement of UNAMID's strategic priorities and benchmarks;

(iv) progress in the implementation of the recommendations made in the Special Report, including the progress of reductions to UNAMIDs military and police component and its impact, including on protection needs and violations and abuses of human rights;

(v) developments and progress on strategically addressing the underlying drivers of inter-communal conflict and the action plan on the prevention and resolution of inter-communal conflict;

(vi) developments and progress in addressing the challenges facing UNAMID;

(vii) enhanced, detailed and full information on abuses and violations of human rights, including those committed against women and children and violations of international humanitarian law;

(viii) developments regarding UNAMID's support for local conflict resolution mechanisms, including progress regarding the full and effective participation of women; and

(ix) on the implementation of this resolution;

42. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide an assessment of the status of implementation of the DDPD in the next 60 day report on UNAMID;

43. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 27 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of December 2016 under the presidency of Spain (see annex). This assessment was prepared under my supervision, after consultation with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Román **Oyarzun Marchesi**

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Annex to the letter dated 27 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English]

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Spain (December 2016)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Spain in December 2016, the Security Council held 31 public meetings, 2 private meetings and 17 consultations of the whole. During the closed consultations, two additional substantive items were discussed under the item entitled "Other matters". The Council also held an Arria formula meeting on synergies between Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Security Council adopted 15 resolutions, agreed on 2 presidential statements and issued 9 statements to the press.

Among the public meetings were two open debates and one high-level briefing. On 12 December, the Security Council held a high-level briefing on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts: international judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism, chaired by the Minister for Justice of Spain, Rafael Catalá, in which resolution 2322 (2016) was unanimously adopted, and was co-sponsored by 51 Member States. On 15 December, the Security Council held an open debate at the ministerial level entitled "Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: preventing catastrophe: a global agenda for stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors" chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Alfonso Dastis. Forty-nine Member States participated in the meeting, in which resolution 2325 (2016) was unanimously adopted under the co-sponsorship of 77 Member States, including those of the 15 members of the Council. On 20 December, the Council held another open debate entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: trafficking in persons in conflict situations", chaired by the Prime Minister of Spain, Mariano Rajoy. Sixty-four Member States took the floor during the debate, in which resolution 2331 (2016) was unanimously adopted, and received 60 co-sponsorships.

Africa

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 5 December, the Security Council issued a statement by the President (S/PRST/2016/18) on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo following the visit of the Council to the country from 11 to 13 November.

Subsequently, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Maman Sidikou, briefed the Security Council on the latest political and security developments, with particular emphasis on the good offices undertaken by the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo.

He encouraged the Security Council to reinforce the message that the Congolese political actors remained primarily responsible and accountable for the peace and stability of their country, as well as to express its appreciation of the

efforts of the Conférence, and to urge the Prime Minister-designate, Samy Badibanga, to form an inclusive transitional government. Given the potential impact of other regional matters on the country, he reassured the Council that he would continue his close coordination and collaboration with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, briefed the Security Council on United Nations support to the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He recalled that the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat undertook an advisory mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also referred to the political agreement of 18 October 2016, under which elections would be announced by 30 October 2017. The continued support of the international community and the broadening of the base of the political consensus would be critical to making that possible. Furthermore, he explained that the Electoral Division of MONUSCO was being established, and concluded that it was essential that both the Mission and the United Nations Development Programme were provided the means to deliver on their commitments and mandates.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations referred to the fight of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo against armed groups in the east of the country, particularly the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda and the Allied Democratic Forces. He also mentioned the presence of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition in Congolese territory and called on the United Nations to solve the issue. With regard to the ongoing dialogue and the electoral process, he focused on the implementation of the commitments assumed by the Head of State in the political agreement of 18 October, which included the appointment of a new Prime Minister, the formation of a national unity government, the review of the voting registry and the holding of elections.

Most Security Council members stressed the need for all political stakeholders to engage in an inclusive dialogue in order to build a broad consensus with regard to the elections. Some delegations underscored the importance of the political agreement of 18 October, while others considered it to be a starting point. In that regard, several Council members commended the recent mediation efforts by the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo, as well as the role played by the African Union and other regional organizations, in particular the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. A number of Council members called for President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, to respect the Constitution and not to seek a third term. However, others emphasized that the interpretation of the Congolese Constitution was incumbent upon its own Constitutional Court, and reiterated that the future of the country must be determined by the Congolese people themselves. With regard to security, Council members pointed out that the armed groups operating in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo still posed a dangerous threat.

During closed consultations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the New York Office of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Andrew Gilmour, answered the questions of several Security Council members with regard to his recent visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 19 December, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the attack perpetrated that day by a Mayi-Mayi armed group in Butembo, North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which led to the

deaths of a South African peacekeeper of MONUSCO and a Congolese police officer, as well as injuring two other South African peacekeepers.

Liberia

On 2 December, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hervé Ladsous, briefed the Security Council on the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (S/2016/968). He explained that the political environment in the country was dominated by preparations for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for October 2017, and noted that Liberia remained stable and that there had not been any serious security incident warranting intervention by UNMIL during the entire year of 2016. In that regard, he highlighted that the Liberian institutions had lived up to the expectations posed by their assumption of the Mission's security responsibilities after 30 June 2016. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the three possible options with regard to the future of UNMIL, as outlined in the report. Irrespective of the decision of the Council, he considered it important that Liberia remain on the agenda of the Council through the establishment of the next administration. He stressed that it would also be advisable for the Mission to retain some capacity to respond, in extremis, should there be a deterioration of stability that risked a strategic reversal.

The Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Per Thöresson, presented to the Security Council the conclusions emanating from a recent visit to Liberia, and a multi-stakeholder forum on sustaining peace through transition in Liberia, which was hosted by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government of Liberia. One of the key conclusions of the visit was that, while no one seemed to believe that the country was facing an imminent risk of relapse to conflict, there was a general agreement that root causes and potential triggers of conflict remained unresolved. He asked the Council to also take into consideration the socioeconomic situation in which the election and transition would take place.

A representative of civil society, the National Coordinator for the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding-Women in Peacebuilding Network in Liberia, Victoria Wollie, spoke to the Security Council on a country-specific situation. She stressed that Liberia was at a critical juncture as UNMIL continued its drawdown, and discussed a number of concerns, such as the proliferation of illicit drugs, the low levels of political representation of women, the high number of crimes related to sexual and gender-based violence and the prevalence of harmful traditional practices. In that context, she underscored that women needed the Peacebuilding Commission to fill any gaps left by the possible departure of UNMIL.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations considered the measures outlined by the Secretary-General on defining the possible mandate of a successor mission to UNMIL to be largely favourable. With regard to when the transition from full peacekeeping operations should occur, he proposed an extension for a period of one year. While acknowledging the concerns associated with his request, he highlighted the need to bring UNMIL to an end that would not require a return to the Security Council, asking that the Council not ignore the possibility of another risk to the ongoing recovery efforts of Liberia, and extend the Mission's mandate for another year.

In closed consultations, Security Council members expressed different views with regard to the options for adjusting UNMIL. Some members mentioned the successful conclusion of the security transition and, with reference to the report of the Secretary-General, expressed the view that there was no threat to international

peace and security, and that the remaining challenges were of a peacebuilding nature. Others stressed the fragility of the situation in Liberia and underscored the risks linked to the holding of elections in October 2017. Most delegations agreed on the need to maintain gains while avoiding the creation of a culture of dependency.

On 23 December, the Security Council adopted resolution 2333 (2016), with 12 votes in favour and 3 abstentions, by which it reduced the Mission's 1,240 military personnel to a ceiling of 434 and its police strength to 310 personnel, and extended the mandate of UNMIL for a final period until 30 March 2018.

Libya

On 6 December, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Martin Kobler, briefed the Security Council on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on UNSMIL (S/2016/1011). He recalled that the Presidency Council of Libya had been operating for almost nine months from Tripoli, and it was meeting regularly with financial institutions to address the country's economic troubles. He expressed appreciation for the support of the international community and informed the Council that advances against terrorism had been made in both the east and the west of the country. The work of the institutions of the Libyan Political Agreement was, however, below expectations. Furthermore, he explained that the fragmented security situation allowed criminal and terrorist networks to flourish, and expressed the view that the violent clashes were symptoms of the lack of security and underlying tensions among communities. In that context, he supported the enforcement of the arms embargo. The Special Representative concluded by pointing out six questions that still needed to be addressed: the outstanding political questions; the issue of armed groups in Tripoli; the continuation of the fight against terrorism; the fundamentals of the Libyan economy; the issue of human rights and the rule of law, including the situation of migrants; and the importance of UNSMIL returning to Tripoli in a phased way, once security concerns had been adequately mitigated.

The Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, Ramlan Ibrahim, briefed the Security Council on the work of the Committee from 15 September to 6 December. He referred to the security issues contained in the interim report of the Panel of Experts on Libya, as well as to a number of violations of the arms embargo and individual sanctions described in the report. He informed the Council of the discussions of the Committee with regard to the 16 recommendations made by the Panel of Experts, 6 of which were agreed to be followed up, and briefly touched on the notably increased activities of the Committee during the reporting period.

Subsequently, under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations intervened to welcome the extension of the mandate of UNSMIL. He hoped that the Mission would soon be able to return to Tripoli and be more active in the coming months, in particular with regard to strengthening State institutions and promoting the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. In that connection, he explained that the Agreement still faced very serious difficulties owing to the rejection by the House of Representatives of the Government of National Accord, whose success largely depended upon the implementation of certain security measures. He also commended the efforts made with respect to fighting terrorism, and highlighted a number of issues included in the latest report of the Secretary-General on UNSMIL. He expressed his preference that the Mission's mandate focus on additional sectors, such as security, institution-strengthening or the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

With respect to the Committee, he expressed the hope that the sanctions would be managed in a different manner, and asked for the presidential guard to be exempt from the arms embargo.

In closed consultations, Security Council members supported the extension of the mandate of UNSMIL, scheduled for later that month, and discussed the tasks that it should carry out. They also assessed the current situation in the country, expressed their views on the political and security roles that could be played by national stakeholders and highlighted the urgent need for the unification of Libya and its State institutions on the basis of an inclusive political dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, most delegations touched upon the latest developments in the fight against terrorist groups, with particular attention to the case of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Da'esh. Other topics raised during the meeting included the illegal exportation of oil, the flow of migrants in Libya and the need for the national economic institutions to step up their cooperation with the Government of National Accord.

On 7 December, the Security Council issued a press statement reiterating its support to the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and those of UNSMIL, and encouraging their intensified efforts in facilitating implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement. Council members expressed their deep concern over the challenging political and security context in Libya. They further expressed deep concern over the recent escalation of violence between armed groups in Tripoli, and called on all parties to accelerate the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement.

On 13 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2323 (2016), by which it extended until 15 September 2017 the mandate of UNSMIL.

United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

On 13 December, the Security Council held consultations under the item entitled "Other matters" at the request of Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to discuss the latest developments with regard to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations expressed his concern over the lack of progress with regard to the situation in the area of Guerguerat, where both parties reported alleged violations of the ceasefire. However, the Mission did not have the capacity to verify the veracity of those claims. He stressed the need for both parties to respect the ceasefire and reduce tensions in order to avoid an eventual escalation of violence, and reported on the efforts aimed at restoring full functionality to MINURSO. In that regard, he elaborated on the ongoing recruitment process, as well as on the deployment of staff and equipment. A review report with recommendations to increase the adaptability and effectiveness of the Mission, he said, was still pending.

Peace consolidation in West Africa

On 10 December, the Security Council issued a press statement strongly condemning the statement by the outgoing President of the Gambia, Yahya Jammeh, rejecting the 1 December official election results proclaimed by the Independent Electoral Commission and calling for new elections. The Council called on Mr. Jammeh to respect the choice of the sovereign people of the Gambia, urged him to carry out a peaceful and orderly transition process, and requested that the security of the President-elect, Adama Barrow, and that of all Gambian citizens, be fully ensured.

On 12 December, the Council held urgent consultations to discuss the situation in the Gambia at the request of the delegation of Senegal. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, explained that Mr. Jammeh had initially accepted the results of the 1 December presidential election and had congratulated Mr. Barrow. However, Mr. Jammeh later rejected the outcome and alleged that irregularities had taken place. The Under-Secretary-General considered that to be a denial of the will of the Gambian people, and expressed his concern with regard to the safety of Mr. Barrow. He explained that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, was using his good offices with a wide range of national and international stakeholders with a view to ensuring a smooth and peaceful transition of power. He informed the Council of the plans of the Special Representative to visit Banjul on 13 December as part of a high-level delegation that would include a number of leaders from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The members of the Security Council held a unified position on the issue, reiterating the ideas they had expressed in their press statement of 10 December. They renewed their request to respect the choice of the sovereign people of the Gambia and to transfer, without condition or undue delay, power to the President-elect. Council members fully supported the initiatives of ECOWAS and the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General aimed at ensuring a peaceful and orderly transition process, and urged Mr. Jammeh to meet and cooperate with the high-level delegation from the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS that would visit Banjul on 13 December. The members of the Council also reiterated their call to all parties to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from violence, and expressed their commitment to continue to follow closely the evolution of the situation in the Gambia, within the framework of the conflict prevention role of the Council.

On 16 December, the Security Council discussed the situation in the Gambia in urgent consultations at the request of the Department of Political Affairs. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs informed the Council that the ECOWAS high-level delegation that had travelled to Banjul met with Mr. Jammeh on 13 December, although the latter did not allow the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to attend the meeting. The takeover of the premises of the Independent Electoral Commission of the Gambia by the military also took place that day. The Under-Secretary-General informed the Council that the ruling party, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction, had submitted an appeal to the Gambian Supreme Court against what they considered to be a fraudulent decision. He also expressed his concerns with regard to the safety and security of Mr. Barrow, to whom the Government had not assigned any protection. In that context, the United Nations renewed its call to all national and regional stakeholders to avoid any escalation, and reiterated that the international community had to take a strong and firm position.

Members of the Security Council expressed their serious concerns with regard to the takeover of the premises of Independent Electoral Commission of the Gambia by the military, and urged the military to immediately vacate those premises and to avoid any interference in the peaceful transfer of power. Council members further encouraged the African Union and ECOWAS to pursue their efforts to avoid a further deterioration of the situation in the Gambia. They also reiterated their support for the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and urged Mr. Jammeh to cooperate and to ensure a peaceful and orderly transition process. They reiterated their call to all parties, including security forces, to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from violence. They insisted that the security of the Mr. Barrow, and that of all Gambian citizens, be fully ensured. The members of the

Council expressed their commitment to continue following closely the evolution of the situation in the Gambia.

On 19 December, the Security Council discussed the situation in the Gambia in urgent consultations at the request of the delegation of Senegal. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs informed the Council that the leaders present at the fiftieth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, convened in Abuja on 17 December, called on Mr. Jammeh to accept the result of the polls and refrain from any action likely to compromise the transition and peaceful transfer of power to Mr. Barrow. In that regard, the final communiqué adopted at the end of the ECOWAS session included a number of decisions on the matter of the Gambia. The Under-Secretary-General conveyed the request of ECOWAS to have such decisions endorsed by the Council. He stressed the commitment of the United Nations to fully support those decisions, and commended the firm stand taken by the regional group with respect to the situation in the Gambia.

Security Council members expressed their readiness to show their support to the decisions recently taken by ECOWAS, and agreed to discuss a presidential statement on the Gambia. Besides reiterating the ideas expressed in the latest Security Council press statements, certain delegations underscored the need for the Gambian armed and security forces to remain neutral, and others stressed the importance of having ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations work together.

On 21 December, the Security Council issued a statement by the President (S/PRST/2016/19) on peace consolidation in West Africa, in which it recalled several documents previously issued by the United Nations, the African Union and ECOWAS with regard to the situation in the Gambia. In particular, the Council welcomed and encouraged the decisions that were taken in that regard during the fiftieth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, as well as the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to recognize Mr. Barrow as President-elect of the Gambia. Furthermore, the Council reiterated its request to Mr. Jammeh to fully respect the results of the presidential election, commended the initiatives of ECOWAS aimed at ensuring a peaceful and orderly transition process and welcomed the appointment by ECOWAS of the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, as Mediator in the Gambia, and the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, as Co-Chair. The Council further requested that the security of Mr. Barrow, and that of all Gambian citizens, be fully ensured. Moreover, the Council requested that the Gambian defence and security forces demonstrate maximum restraint, and asked the Secretary-General to facilitate political dialogue.

South Sudan

On 15 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2326 (2016), by which it extended until 16 December 2016 the mandate of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which should continue to include a regional protection force.

On 16 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2327 (2016), by which it extended until 15 December 2017 the mandate of UNMISS, and decided that it should continue to include a regional protection force.

On 19 December, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on the deteriorating situation in South Sudan, which he described as one of the world's most urgent crises. He said that the responsibility for that tragic state of affairs lay on the shoulders of the country's leaders. Moreover, he pointed out that there were

clear indications that the parties were contemplating a military escalation. He further reiterated his call for an arms embargo, which in his view would diminish the capacity of all sides to wage war. At the same time, he encouraged the parties to reinvigorate an inclusive political process that was deemed credible by the international community, and expressed the view that a national dialogue could be a positive step if all stakeholders were able to participate in freedom and safety — an environment that did not exist at the time in South Sudan. In that regard, he called on regional leaders to invest all possible efforts into resuscitating the political process, and commended the ongoing initiatives. He also warned that the conflict in South Sudan had already assumed an ethnic dimension. He referred to the two independent investigations linked to the performance of the troops of UNMISS, which for its part continued to face serious restrictions on its freedom of movement. Furthermore, he asked the Government of South Sudan to fulfil its pledges of unconditional acceptance of the deployment of the regional protection force.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, reported on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, which he said had deteriorated dramatically since his last briefing six months before owing to the destructive violence on the ground. He also recalled that approximately 3.1 million people in South Sudan had been forced to flee their homes, and pointed out that the cost of the protracted conflict continued to be particularly brutal for children. He further warned that hunger and malnutrition levels were disconcertingly high, and basic services were severely stretched. Women and girls continued to face heightened risks of sexual violence, particularly by armed actors, while the ability of humanitarian partners to provide life-saving assistance in a timely and effective manner was diminishing at an alarming pace. He reported on increasing levels of bureaucratic obstruction and intimidation to aid organizations, mainly by the Government, but also by parts of the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition. The access of humanitarian actors to those most in need continued to be restricted. He concluded by sending a three-part message: first, that without a cessation of violence the humanitarian crisis would cascade beyond anyone's control; second, that collective leverage had to be exerted to ensure the facilitation of unhindered access; and third, that there was no greater urgency than to prevent a genocide from happening.

The Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations took the floor under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council. He highlighted the political will of his Government, which expressed its commitment to fully implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, and expressed the view that, if there was any failure or delay in the deployment of the regional protection force, it was not on the part of South Sudan. He gave his assurances that the national dialogue would include all stakeholders in the country, and disagreed with the view that the ongoing conflict in South Sudan could become an outright ethnic war. While recognizing the importance of the protection of civilians and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, he hoped that UNMISS would also pay due attention to the capacity-building of government institutions. He also rejected the proposed arms embargo and threats of sanctions, and regretted the moral equivalency that in his view did not distinguish between a legitimately elected government and an armed rebellion intent on overthrowing that government.

Subsequently, in closed consultations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, reported a number of obstacles to the deployment of the regional protection force and elaborated on the restrictions imposed to the freedom of movement of both UNMISS and humanitarian actors. With regard to the political process, he considered the calling for a national dialogue

to be a positive development, but pointed out that it had to be conducted in adequate conditions. Meanwhile, he informed the Security Council that the security situation continued to deteriorate.

Many Security Council members expressed their concerns with regard to the worsening of the humanitarian situation in South Sudan, and certain delegations highlighted the risk of an eventual increase of violence and its impact on the civilian population. Accordingly, there were calls for an immediate removal of all obstacles imposed on UNMISS and the humanitarian actors. Some Council members called for imposing an arms embargo, and some also referred to individual designations for targeted sanctions. On the other hand, some delegations expressed the view that such measures would not be a solution, and warned that the measures could undermine the ongoing political process. There were also differing views with regard to the level of cooperation shown by the Government of South Sudan. Some Council members welcomed the Government's acceptance of the deployment of the regional protection force and commended its constructive attitude, whereas others underscored that the Government's commitments had not been translated into actions on the ground.

On 23 December, the Security Council proceeded to vote on a draft resolution (S/2016/1085), submitted by the United States of America, to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan and targeted sanctions on three individuals. There were 7 votes in favour and 8 abstentions. The draft resolution was therefore not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

Sudan and the International Criminal Court

On 13 December, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, presented to the Security Council her Office's twenty-fourth report on the situation in Darfur, pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005). She informed the Council that all five suspects against whom warrants of arrest had been issued by the Court remained at large. In that regard, she criticized the Council's inaction and requested that the Council consider using the tools at its disposal when findings of non-compliance were received. Ms. Bensouda also raised concerns with regard to the lack of access by her Office, as well as by the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, to the Jebel Marra region. With regard to the lack of resources, she indicated that the Council's support in obtaining funding from the General Assembly would increase the investigative capacity of her team.

In their statements, some Security Council members expressed their support for the work of the International Criminal Court and called on the Government of the Sudan to meet its obligations under resolution 1593 (2005) to cooperate fully with the Court and execute outstanding arrest warrants. Some members also asserted that the Council should take measures in that regard. Other Council members criticized the assessments of the Court in Darfur, which in their view could hardly contribute to the reconciliation process. They also stated that attempts to shift the burden of financing of Court investigations in Darfur onto the United Nations were unjustified. They also said that the Court should not take any measures that could affect peace, security, stability, sovereignty or territorial integrity in African States, stressing that the referral of a situation to the Court did not affect the applicability of the norms of international law pertaining to the right to jurisdictional immunity for Heads of State of those States that were not party to the Rome Statute. In addition, some members called for the resumption of dialogue as the only solution to political disputes in Darfur and the Sudan.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations criticized

the Prosecutor's report and briefing as containing many examples of inconsistency, contradiction and unworthiness with regard to an issue that had long been settled by the conclusion of the comprehensive agreement welcomed by the Council in its resolution 2003 (2011), and by the agreement's implementation across the board. He reminded the Council that the Sudan was not a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and, moreover, that the Court was not an organ of the United Nations.

United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa/Lord's Resistance Army

On 7 December, the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), François Loucény Fall, briefed the Security Council on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA (S/2016/996). He informed the Council that, despite a peaceful and successful transition in the Central African Republic earlier that year, the recent outbreak of violence had resulted in high numbers of fatalities. He stressed the importance of sustained assistance by international partners, including the quick disbursement of the pledges announced in the donors' conference recently held in Brussels. He also reported on the agreement signed on 15 November between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon to submit their long-standing border dispute to the International Court of Justice. Regarding the political tensions arising from recent and upcoming electoral processes in the region, he underscored the importance of genuine and inclusive political dialogue and reiterated his intention to continue offering his good offices. He indicated that the collective efforts of the countries of the Lake Chad basin in fighting terrorism had resulted in substantial military and security successes, though Boko Haram remained a serious threat to regional stability, and that timely support for the Multinational Joint Task Force was critical in order to maintain the progress made. The Acting Special Representative pointed out that the Lord's Resistance Army also continued to threaten regional security, and proceeded to explain in detail the work of UNOCA on that issue, which included the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy. He expressed his concern about the announced withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the African Union Regional Task Force, which would lead to a security vacuum that the Lord's Resistance Army would benefit from. Finally, he informed the Council of an increase in the number of piracy incidents in the Gulf of Guinea, while the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea was not yet fully operational.

In closed consultations, Security Council members expressed their support to the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General and encouraged him to continue providing his good offices. Certain participants noted that he should only do so at the request of the governments involved. Council members also noted the important role of preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts for peace and stability in Central Africa. In that regard, some delegations referred to specific situations related to recent and future electoral processes in various countries of the region. Council members remained concerned by the security challenges posed by the Lord's Resistance Army and Boko Haram and encouraged a regional approach to tackling those security threats and their humanitarian impact in the region. Furthermore, a number of delegations stressed the risks resulting from an eventual withdrawal of the Ugandan contingent currently fighting the Lord's Resistance Army. With regard to the fight against Boko Haram, many delegations stressed the need for the international community to increase its support for regional efforts, including the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force. Moreover, both Council members and the Acting Special Representative agreed that piracy was a persistent threat to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Finally, most

delegations expressed their concerns with regard to the ongoing humanitarian crises that several countries in the region were facing, especially in the Lake Chad basin.

Middle East

Iraq

On 30 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2335 (2016), by which it renewed a number of provisions included in resolution 1958 (2010) on the oil-for-food programme.

Lebanon

On 19 December, the Security Council issued a press statement welcoming the announcement, on 18 December, of the formation of a national unity government in Lebanon, and congratulated Prime Minister Saad Hariri and his Cabinet. Council members encouraged all of the country's political leaders to build on the momentum of national unity, and stressed the importance of the holding of parliamentary elections by May 2017, in accordance with the Constitution of Lebanon, in order to sustain its democratic tradition.

The members of the Security Council underscored their previous calls for all Lebanese parties to recommit to the country's policy of dissociation and to cease any involvement in the Syrian crisis, consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration. They reaffirmed their strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council, and called on the international community to ensure continued support to Lebanon in addressing the economic, security and humanitarian challenges facing the country. They reiterated their appreciation for the International Support Group for Lebanon and their support to the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 5 December, the Security Council held closed consultations on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Subsequently, the Security Council proceeded to vote on a draft resolution (S/2016/1026) submitted by Egypt, New Zealand and Spain. There were 11 votes in favour, 3 votes against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution was therefore rejected, owing to the vote against the resolution by two permanent members.

On 8 December, the Security Council held closed consultations on the Middle East, in particular the Syrian Arab Republic, during which the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the efforts to achieve a political solution to the Syrian crisis. He warned Council members about the extremely grave situation on the ground as new levels of violence were reached, particularly in the city of Aleppo. He reiterated that there was no possible military solution to the crisis in Syria, and summarized the dynamics related to the talks that had been held in Geneva.

Focusing on the situation in Aleppo, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General warned the Security Council that a large number of civilians were still in the districts affected by the conflict, although he could not provide concrete figures, while food, water and medical supplies were running out. He detailed the responses of the United Nations agencies and called on those with influence on both sides to facilitate evacuation efforts. At the same time, he reiterated that the United Nations stood ready to assist the parties in case the political process were to be resumed, and

stressed the need for a fundamental overhaul of the Syrian political system, including on aspects such as the diffusing and sharing of power. The Special Envoy also referenced the economic impact of the conflict and called for an international plan for assistance and recovery.

Security Council members expressed their support for the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, and addressed the latest developments on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Among the main topics of discussion were the prospects of a political process in the country, the role of the United Nations, ways to protect the population of Aleppo and other cities, the reported attacks against medical facilities, the ongoing military operations and the threat of terrorism. Many delegations also expressed their points of view on the draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Aleppo that had been considered by the Council on 5 December.

On 13 December, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Aleppo. The complete statement of the Secretary-General can be found in the record of the 7834th meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.7834).

Many Security Council members denounced the worsening humanitarian situation, called for the protection of civilians and the full respect of international humanitarian law and denounced the inability of the Council to prevent the current situation. Many also asked for a sustainable ceasefire, the presence of impartial international observers in the city to oversee the safe evacuation and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance. Other members emphasized the need to fight terrorism and the terrorists groups present in Aleppo, and others criticized the spread of propaganda, disinformation and fake news.

Speaking under of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations rejected the statement made by the Secretary-General as unverified information. He denounced the calling of emergency sessions by certain members of the Security Council as being done on the basis of fabricated information.

On 16 December, at the request of the delegation of France, the Security Council held closed consultations, under the item entitled "Other matters", on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported on the humanitarian situation in Aleppo and the ongoing efforts to evacuate its civilian population. He stressed the importance of having a strong United Nations presence on the ground to verify and ensure the accuracy of information, as well as to provide medical and food support to those in need.

Many Security Council members referred to the contradictory reports on the situation on the ground and supported the idea of having the United Nations monitor the evacuation process. The delegation of France, who had requested the consultations, presented a draft resolution in that regard. For their part, some Council members underscored the complexity of the situation, especially given the rapidly changing security environment. There was also a discussion on the impediments to access faced by United Nations officials, and most delegations reiterated the need to pursue a political solution to the conflict.

On 18 December, the Security Council held closed consultations, at the request of the delegation of France, on the humanitarian situation in Aleppo, to further discuss the draft resolution proposed by that delegation.

On 19 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2328 (2016) with regard to the humanitarian situation in Aleppo.

On 21 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2332 (2016), presented by Egypt, New Zealand and Spain, by which it renewed until 10 January 2018 the decisions in paragraphs 2 and 3 of its resolution 2165 (2014) on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to facilitate cross-border humanitarian assistance to populations in need.

On 23 December, the Security Council was briefed by the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, John Ging, on the basis of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014) and 2258 (2015) (S/2016/1057). His briefing focused on the evacuation of Aleppo and the general humanitarian situation in the rest of the country. The Director stressed that, while the evacuation of the eastern districts of Aleppo had concluded, the situation in the country remained catastrophic. He updated the Council on the United Nations role in Aleppo and in supporting the evacuation of the city: observing the evacuation itself; supporting the evacuees once they had left; seeking access to the retaken areas of eastern Aleppo in order to provide assistance to those remaining in those areas; and continuing ongoing humanitarian operations to support those across the remainder of the city. He also updated and notified the Council of the arrangements undertaken pursuant to resolution 2328 (2016). With regard to the areas outside Aleppo, he denounced the humanitarian situation as dreadful: in neighbouring Idlib governorate, the towns of Fu'ah and Kafraya remained besieged by non-state armed opposition groups. He said that the United Nations continued to follow operations against ISIL occurring around Al-Bab and Raqqa with concern. ISIL advances in Palmyra and nearby areas in eastern Homs were also of major concern. Moreover, he criticized the fact that, despite the humanitarian situation, they had been persistently hindered by obstacles to delivering much-needed assistance. Finally, he reiterated that there was no humanitarian solution to the crisis and welcomed the announcement by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria with regard to the resumption of political talks in February. The complete statement of the Director can be found in the record of the 7852th meeting of the Security Council (S/PV.7852).

On 30 December, the Security Council held closed consultations on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, at the request of the Russian Federation, during which that delegation presented a draft resolution with regard to the agreements reached earlier that day in the context of the settlement of the Syrian conflict. All Council members expressed their openness to considering the draft resolution, and several delegations asked for further clarification on a number of issues.

On 31 December, the Security Council held closed consultations on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, at the request of New Zealand, to further discuss the draft resolution presented the previous day by the Russian Federation.

Subsequently, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2336 (2016), by which it welcomed and supported the efforts by the Russian Federation and Turkey to end violence in the Syrian Arab Republic and jump-start a political process, and took note of the documents issued by the Russian Federation and Turkey in that regard.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 16 December, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. He highlighted that,

while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not the cause of the wars in the Middle East, its resolution could create a momentum for peace throughout the region. He recalled that Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had been under military occupation since 1967, and said that those lands comprised the future Palestinian State, ultimately to be agreed by the parties through direct negotiations. In that regard, he expressed the view that the right of the Jewish people to have a State did not negate the right of the Palestinian people to statehood. However, he stressed that Palestinian frustration and grievances were growing under the weight of nearly half a century of humiliating occupation, and that at the same time Israelis felt that there was no end in sight to terrorism, as incitement and calls for the obliteration of Israel continued unchallenged by Palestinian leaders. The Secretary-General stated that the framework for peace remained unchanged — the establishment of two States, on the basis of the principle of land for peace and a just and comprehensive regional peace — but despite early optimism, attempts to reach a final resolution failed to make headway. He underscored that there was a way out of that deadlock: by both sides implementing the recommendations in the recent report of the Middle East Quartet. There were, however, major obstacles, including the settlement activity by Israel beyond the 1967 line and its heavy-handed security responses, as well as the absence of Palestinian unity throughout the occupied territory and the indiscriminate rocket fire by Hamas towards Israel. In that regard, he stressed that Hamas had to renounce once and for all the use of violence and recognize the right of Israel to exist. The Secretary-General pointed out that, over the past 10 years, only two resolutions had been adopted on the Middle East peace process, the most recent almost 8 years ago. In addition, he argued that any bias against Israel within the United Nations bodies should never be accepted, and pointed out that a disproportionate volume of resolutions, reports and conferences criticized Israel. For the future, he called on the Council to reaffirm without reservations that there was no alternative to the two-State solution, and urged the development, in consultations with the parties, of an agreed framework advancing a final resolution of the conflict on the basis of direct negotiations.

All Security Council members took the floor in the open Chamber. There was overall support for the idea of adopting a resolution with a view to promoting the two-State solution, but one delegation underscored its objection to any resolution that could delegitimize Israel. Most Council members expressed their support for the ongoing and planned initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for both parties to resume direct negotiations. There was consensus on the idea that settlements built in the West Bank were an obstacle to a two-State solution, with some delegations expressing concern with regard to the bill that was being discussed by the Knesset to legalize such outposts.

In closed consultations, Security Council members were briefed by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov. He reported on some recent developments, including the bill that was being debated in the Knesset for the legalization of outposts, and housing units built on private Palestinian land in the West Bank. He also referred to the Fatah congress that had recently taken place.

On 23 December, the Security Council adopted resolution 2334 (2016), with 14 votes in favour and 1 abstention, which reaffirmed the illegality of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory and their threat to the two-State solution. The resolution also condemned violence, inflammatory rhetoric and the incitement of terrorism, and called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, and for all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final-status issues in the Middle East peace process within the time frame specified by the Middle East Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010.

United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

On 13 December, the Security Council held closed consultations on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the basis of the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/1037). He highlighted that UNDOF had completed its planned limited return to Camp Faouar, where more than 150 personnel were already redeployed. It was a significant milestone and represented the first phase of the return of the Force to positions and observation posts in the area of separation and the area of limitation that had been vacated in 2014. He expressed concern about the spillover of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the significant increase in retaliatory fire across the ceasefire line, particularly in the southern parts of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side. He also endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General to extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 30 June 2017.

Security Council members supported the six-month extension of the mandate of UNDOF and underscored the importance of an incremental return to vacated positions in the area of separation, conditions permitting, commencing with a limited return to Camp Faouar. They stressed the need to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground, and expressed their concern with regard to the violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, as well as the disturbing presence of listed terrorist groups. The use of technology and equipment to enhance UNDOF observation tasks and to improve Force protection was also raised by a number of Council members.

On 19 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2330 (2016), by which it extended until 30 June 2017 the mandate of UNDOF.

Americas

Colombia

On 1 December, the Security Council issued a press statement welcoming the ratification by the Colombian Congress of the new final peace agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army.

Europe

Georgia

On 6 December, the Security Council held closed consultations, under the item entitled "Other matters", at the request of the delegation of Ukraine, to discuss recent developments with regard to the situation in Georgia.

International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

On 8 December, the Security Council held a debate on the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia with the participation of the President of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Judge Carmel Agius; the President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Judge Theodor Meron; and the Prosecutor of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Serge Brammertz. The representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Rwanda and Serbia also took the floor in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Judge Agius explained that, with only one trial, one appeal and one contempt case remaining, the mandate of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was nearly complete, and so he had recently submitted a request for a final extension of the terms of office of the judges, as he was confident that the Tribunal would close its doors at the end of 2017. However, he regretted the pending contempt case of *Prosecutor v. Petar Jojić et al.*, in which Serbia had yet to execute the arrest warrants for three indicted persons that had been issued 22 months ago. He requested the Security Council's support on the matter. In addition, he called on all Member States to execute the international arrest warrants and orders to surrender. Finally, he referred to the problem of staff attrition, which, he argued, would increase the risk that the Tribunal would not be able to complete its remaining cases by the end of November 2017.

Judge Meron recalled the good progress made by the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals on a number of fronts. He emphasized that, while the Mechanism was able to do a great deal on its own, it was also dependent upon cooperation from others, and he therefore thanked the assistance provided to it by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and thanked the Mechanism's host States for the support they provided. Moreover, he stressed that the Mechanism also remained reliant upon cooperation from Member States when it came to the apprehension of the remaining fugitives, the enforcement of sentences and the identification of a resolution to the difficult situation involving those acquitted or released individuals currently present in Arusha, and called upon all Member States to support efforts related to those issues. Finally, he mentioned the detention of Judge Aydin Sefa Akay, and, with reference to Judge Akay's diplomatic immunity, called upon the members of the Security Council to do their utmost to bring about a timely and satisfactory resolution to that situation.

Mr. Brammertz, in accordance with his dual role, reported on the activities of both the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals in Arusha and The Hague. He explained that his Offices were firmly focused on three priorities: expeditiously completing trials and appeals; locating and arresting the remaining eight fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda; and providing assistance to national jurisdictions prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. He highlighted that, while cooperation in relation to Rwanda remained smooth and effective, and there were no issues to report, the situation in relation to the former Yugoslavia was unfortunately more mixed. Mr. Brammertz reported that judicial cooperation had experienced a significant setback with the failure of Serbian authorities to enforce the war crimes conviction in the *Djukić* case and that, with respect to Croatia, there continued to be a disconnect between the official commitment to supporting war crimes justice and what was happening in practice.

Most members of the Security Council expressed their support for the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, praising in particular their adjustment to the scheduled closing of the Tribunal at the end of 2017. Some members also recognized the hardship caused by the loss of personnel. Some delegations reminded Serbia of its obligation to cooperate with the Tribunal. Some delegations expressed concern about and showed support for the need to resolve in a timely manner the situation related to Judge Akay.

On 19 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2329 (2016), by which it extended the terms of office of seven permanent judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia until 30 November 2017, as well as the term of office of Judge Carmel Agius as President of the Tribunal until

31 December 2017. By the same resolution, the Council reappointed Mr. Serge Brammertz as the Prosecutor of the Tribunal from 1 January 2017 to 30 November 2017. The Council strongly emphasized that all the extensions and the reappointment should be final. The Council also underlined that States should cooperate fully with the Tribunal and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals and encouraged the Tribunal to continue implementing the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services contained in its report on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Tribunal.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 19 December, the Security Council held its quarterly debate on the situation in Afghanistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov, and the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations, Gerard van Bohemen, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), briefed the Council, and 13 other delegations participated under rules 37 and 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan noted that the National Unity Government had marked its second anniversary and welcomed its continued efforts towards advancing its reform agenda and enhancing public services. He recalled the message from recent international conferences that Afghanistan would not stand alone. He also welcomed the swift response of the international community to the United Nations appeal for displaced persons and returnees, as Afghan citizens were returning home in record numbers. While acknowledging the work being undertaken by the Government to put in place programmes that would enable both displaced persons and returnees to become part of the economy and their host communities, he highlighted the importance of addressing with urgency the longer term needs of integration. The Special Representative warned that, despite the efforts of the international community and the Afghan Government, a better future was not possible without peace, and called upon the Taliban to commit to direct talks with the Afghan Government, without preconditions. In addition, he mentioned the peace agreement with Hizb-i Islami as proof of the Government's serious intentions. Finally, he expressed his appreciation for the active efforts of countries in the region to assist Afghanistan, as reflected by the outcome of the sixth Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar, India, and reminded the Council that further steps could be taken by countries in the region to improve the prospects of peace.

The Executive Director of UNODC updated the Security Council on the work of UNODC against illicit drugs in Afghanistan and their impact on health, development and security. He lamented the fact that the UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016 had shown a worrying reversal of the efforts to combat that persistent problem, as opium poppy cultivation and production levels had increased. He recalled the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, which underlined the importance of fighting organized crime, including money laundering, corruption and the financing of terrorism, as well as the importance of treating and rehabilitating drug users. Because Afghan heroin was linked to terrorism and the insurgency, and the bulk of opium cultivation took place in areas controlled by the Taliban, the Executive Director expressed his Office's satisfaction with the decision of the Afghan Government to develop a national action plan on violent extremism. He

enumerated the different ways UNODC was promoting cooperation in the region, building the capacities of the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics and the narcotics police, enhancing the capacity of financial intelligence units and the regulatory and criminal justice institutions and working with Afghan counterparts to draft a new, comprehensive anti-corruption law based on international standards and best practices.

The Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) reminded the Council that the sanctions regime was intended to support the peace and reconciliation process. However, despite the sanctions measures, the Taliban had retained the ability to conduct attacks on Afghan forces, the Afghan people and the international presence in Afghanistan. In addition, he highlighted that armed clashes between the Taliban and the Afghan Government continue to be funded mainly by the narcotics economy and the illegal extraction of natural resources. He encouraged Member States to play a more active role in providing information that would keep the sanctions list as up-to-date as possible. Referring to his recent trip to Afghanistan as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), and of the Security Council Committee pursuant to 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, to engage with interlocutors in the Afghan Government, he expressed his appreciation for the level of engagement his delegation received while in Kabul, elaborated on the potential for greater use of the sanctions regime to deter the Taliban and support the peace process, and welcomed the commitments made by the Government of Afghanistan during the visit to engage more actively with the sanctions regime.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations reflected on the advances achieved by his country and on the significant developments that had occurred during 2016. He underlined that effective counter-terrorism required a clear regional and global security architecture and constructive engagement among the relevant stakeholders, and called for the improvement of trust, collaboration and coordination among relevant Member States. He referred to the peace agreement signed with Hizb-i Islami on 29 September, which, he said, represented an opportunity to put together the future, not justify the past. He also highlighted the renewed level of consensus displayed by the President of Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani, and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah in the work of the National Unity Government. While referring to the progress attained on the path of economic cooperation, the Permanent Representative recalled that insecurity presented a primary obstacle to the economic reform and infrastructure-building agenda of Afghanistan. He also recalled the work done by the Government of Afghanistan, in collaboration with the United Nations and international partners, on creating equal opportunities for women, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), and its determination to bring all human rights violators to justice, including those in the highest positions in government. He concluded by referring to the country's search for long-term and viable solutions for returnees and internally displaced persons, and to its ongoing efforts to curb the menace of narcotics and to break its link to criminality.

Most delegations expressed their support for the political process and for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, highlighted the importance of national reconciliation, welcomed the agreement reached by the Afghan Government with Hizb-i Islami, lamented the increase in the number of civilian victims of the conflict and the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, including in northern areas, and expressed their concern with regard to the

situation created by the return of Afghan refugees and undocumented Afghan migrants in massive numbers. In addition, many delegations highlighted the importance of the role of women in the peace process and in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Several delegations also addressed the linkage between narcotics production in Afghanistan and financial support for terrorism.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 9 December, the Security Council held a briefing on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The meeting was preceded by a procedural vote, in which the Council approved the provisional agenda by 9 votes in favour, 5 votes against and 1 abstention.

The Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, asserted that the patterns of grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had repeatedly been established, but that authorities had not given any effective commitment to remedy the situation. He urged members of the Security Council to ensure that the humanitarian situation did not deteriorate further owing to the measures included in resolution 2321 (2016). He highlighted that serious human rights violations were warning signs of instability and conflict, and therefore any attempt to achieve lasting peace and stability demanded justice and redress for victims inside and outside the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In addition, he recalled the obligations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea under international law and called on its Government to abide by them. He also recalled the collective responsibilities of the international community: first, to protect the country's population from violations of international humanitarian law and human rights; second, to live up to the principle and norm of the responsibility to protect; and third, to consider the wider implications of the human rights situation for regional stability. Finally, he supported the use of all the tools at their disposal — the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the United Nations and other international entities — to take action to ensure a better future for the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of the New York Office of OHCHR emphasized that the nature and scale of the violations occurring in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea thoroughly underscored the link between human rights and peace and security. He highlighted that OHCHR continued its efforts to help ensure accountability for violations while seeking every opportunity to engage with the Government, as the Office had continued to offer technical assistance to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to help the Government implement its human rights obligations. He reminded the Security Council that the General Assembly had again in its resolution that year encouraged the Council to take appropriate action to ensure accountability, including through consideration of a referral of the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the International Criminal Court (see General Assembly resolution 71/202). Finally, he asserted that improvement in human rights in the country would not only protect the livelihoods and dignity of people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, but also promote long-term security and stability in the region and beyond.

Some Security Council members were opposed to the Council discussing the situation of human rights, stating that the primary responsibility of the Council was the maintenance of peace and security, and therefore that issue should be discussed in specialized bodies. On the other hand, other delegations expressed the view that there was a link between gross human rights violations and regional and international peace and security and therefore the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fell within the mandate of the Council.

Some Council members expressed their wish to refer the human rights situation to the International Criminal Court and to develop sanctions for reasons related to human rights violations. Some Council members asked for the resumption of dialogue and negotiations aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

Speaking under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations expressed regret that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had turned a blind eye to international calls to improve its human rights record. He recalled the draft resolution of the Third Committee of the General Assembly last month (A/C.3/71/L.23) and emphasized that the country's pursuit of developing nuclear weapons was not only a serious threat to international peace and security but also a grave human rights problem that threatened the very survival of its people, owing to the country's already scarce resources, which he referred to as the reason why the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stood apart from those in other places of the world and why the Security Council had an important role to play in seeking its resolution.

Thematic and general issues

Assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey

On 19 December, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the terrorist attack that had taken place that day in Ankara, and which resulted in the assassination of the Russian ambassador to Turkey.

Berlin terrorist attack

On 20 December, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the barbaric and cowardly terrorist attack that took place in Berlin on the evening of 19 December, during which at least 12 people were killed and dozens were injured.

Cairo terrorist attacks

On 11 December, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack that had taken place that same day in St. Peter's Church, attached to St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, in Cairo, during which at least 25 people were killed and more than 49 were injured. The members of the Council also condemned the terrorist attack that took place in Giza, Egypt, on Friday, 9 December, during which six Egyptian policemen were killed and a number of civilians were injured.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

On 15 December, the Security Council held an open debate entitled "Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: preventing catastrophe: a global agenda for stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors", chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. The Deputy Secretary-General; the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo; the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Stimson Center, Brian Finlay; and the Vice-President of International Trade Law and the Head of the Global Trade Law Practice Group of DHL Global Business Services, T. James Min, participated as briefers.

At the beginning of the open debate, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2325 (2016) on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass

destruction, which was co-sponsored by 77 Member States, including those of the 15 members of the Council.

The Deputy Secretary-General emphasized that preventing non-State actors from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction was among the most important responsibilities of the international community, and accordingly, in a rapidly evolving global security environment, they must also be aware of the growing nexus between weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and cybersecurity. He further emphasized that such a complex web of global threats and risks required a global response. He concluded his intervention by reminding the members of the Security Council that the only sure way to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction was their complete elimination.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs highlighted three priorities. He asserted that the threats and risks associated with biological weapons needed to be addressed and that there was much more work to be done in implementing preventative measures. He also referred to disruptive technologies and the need to consider ways to prevent their misuse, while safeguarding peaceful applications. Finally, he referred to the need to narrow the gap between the needs and the available resources of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and its Expert Group, in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs. In that sense, he highlighted that the support structure of the Committee must be fit for purpose in view of the fast-changing security environment.

Mr. Finlay underlined that, despite the progress achieved, there were two key priorities that remained unaddressed. First, he stressed that, given its mandate, the Committee and the nine members of the Expert Group could not hope to keep pace with the evolving proliferation landscape, nor with the activities and demands of the 193 Member States. He stated that assistance for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) could also come from civil society. He highlighted that, while it was widely accepted that the proliferation threat had grown, there was not yet a common vision on the fact that governments alone could not tackle the issue, and therefore they also needed to take into account the beneficial role that civil society could play. In that regard, he added, the promotion of a non-proliferation culture in civil society could be useful in countering the threat.

Mr. Min emphasized that cooperation between governments was not enough to achieve the aspirations laid out in resolution 1540 (2004). The private sector, he said, must be engaged in the fight for global peace and security and work together with the public sector to combat illicit activities by non-State actors. In particular, he referred to the positive impact that harmonized regulatory requirements in the key markets could have in the fight against proliferation, thereby fostering business.

Seventy-nine participants took the floor in the debate, including representatives of several international and regional organizations and initiatives, among them the African Union, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Financial Action Task Force, the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

Most participants highlighted the transparent way in which the comprehensive review of resolution 1540 (2004) was conducted and the spirit of consensus that made resolution 2325 (2016) possible.

With regard to resolution 2325 (2016), participants highlighted, inter alia, its attention to new risks and threats, its focused approach, the reinforcement of assistance, the promotion of greater coordination between the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and relevant international and regional organizations, and the enhancement of cooperation among that Committee, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism and the Security Council Committee pursuant to 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities.

Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council

On 19 December, the outgoing Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council briefed the Council according to the year of adoption of the related Council resolutions.

The Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations and Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, Rafael Ramírez Carreño, said that the Security Council still did not seem to have grasped the notion that the sole objective of sanctions regimes was to contribute to the political solution of conflicts, and not to punish countries. With regard to the sanctions committees he chaired, the Chair pointed out several improvements in working methods, but expressed regret with regard to ineffectiveness owing to politicization. Furthermore, he found it advisable to consider giving the Chairs greater freedom in the preparation and issuance of reports, and proposed the establishment of an ombudsman to examine with greater justice and due process the inclusion on or exclusion from the sanctions list of persons or entities that were linked to a conflict situation. He concluded by mentioning a few pending tasks of the Council.

The Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations and Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), focused on two areas of working methods: the effectiveness of the sanctions committees, where he mentioned that the decision-making process should not obstruct the discharge of obligations related to resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations; and the process for appointing Chairs, where he welcomed recent improvements but noted that there was still room to do more. He offered five concrete recommendations: avoid duplication and maximize tools; reconsider the use of formulaic statements approved by the sanctions committees in closed consultations; reform the decision-making of the sanctions committees; spread the burden of chairing subsidiary bodies to all Security Council members; and encourage mutual support among elected members.

The Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations and Chair of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, referred to the rejection of the inclusion of specific points raised by the African Union in the agenda of the Ad Hoc Working Group, in particular the rejection of the inclusion of the question of the situation in Western Sahara. He pointed out that the meeting on improving the cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council in sustaining peace in Africa was a remarkable development, and further recommended

that the annual programme of the Ad Hoc Working Group include themes of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006) until 16 January 2016, Román Oyarzun Marchesi, pointed out three ideas to improve the effectiveness of the work of the sanctions committees: promote relevance by avoiding formalisms and allowing substantive debate; increase transparency; and seek to achieve unity in the Security Council in both the adoption and the implementation of resolutions. He also endorsed the five concrete recommendations mentioned above, and referred to specific issues in the three sanctions committees chaired by Spain.

The Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, and Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Ramlan Bin Ibrahim, expressed his concerns with regard to the grave deterioration in the situations of children in many countries affected by conflict. Accordingly, Malaysia had focused on strengthening the normative framework of the Security Council's agenda on children and armed conflict and mainstreaming the issue of child protection into its wider work. In that sense, he recalled the adoption of conclusions by the Working Group on the situation of children in armed conflicts in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Iraq and South Sudan. He then turned to the Committee concerning Libya, in which his delegation had had to carefully balance the work in order to ensure in 2015 that the sanctions regime did not interfere with the political processes, and to ensure in 2016 that it supported the establishment of a Government of National Accord. He elaborated on a number of changes and key aspects of the Committee's work, and encouraged the new Chair to continue pursuing the possibility of organizing a visit to Libya, given the appropriate time and conditions.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 12 December, the Security Council held a high-level briefing on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts: international judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism, chaired by the Minister for Justice of Spain. The Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Jean-Paul Laborde, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions in Kenya, Dorcas Oduor, and the Executive Secretary of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law, Robert Strang, participated as briefers.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2322 (2016) on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, which was co-sponsored by 51 Member States.

The Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate underlined that the first task for the international community was not to tolerate impunity in any way and bring terrorists to justice whenever possible. Within that framework, he welcomed the adoption of resolution 2322 (2016) and made clear that the policies of the international community needed to go beyond traditional security measures and employ a broader perspective based on enhanced international cooperation. Cooperation and mutual legal assistance would, in his view, further strengthen the capacity of central authorities to support prosecutors and investigators. He also referred to Kenya as an example of collaborative

solutions, and to the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism as a model of good practice.

The Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions in Kenya reiterated that crime was no longer a national phenomenon, for it had taken on a transnational dimension, and in that context the weak capacity of any one country to effectively address the emerging new threats translated into an overall weakness in the entire international regime of criminal justice cooperation. Moreover, she expressed the view that practitioners of criminal justice could not realistically work within national borders. She elaborated on the Council of Kenya's efforts to promote international judicial cooperation against terrorism and outlined a number of lessons learned: that a coordinated international response and close regional cooperation were vital; that terrorist groups moved rapidly across national lines and normally found sanctuaries in countries with the weakest links to other countries; that terrorists and other criminals had shown the ability to adapt to the efforts of law enforcement to apprehend them; and that ordinary citizens in many societies were demanding much better service from law enforcement agencies. In order to achieve greater international cooperation against terrorism, she concluded that the international community needed to further encourage the convergence and compatibility of national legislations, introduce complex procedural reforms and develop a much greater capacity for investigation and prosecution.

The Executive Secretary of the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law said that terrorism cases were almost inevitably transnational in nature, and therefore efforts to bring those responsible to justice within a civilian rule of law system required the sharing of evidence across jurisdictions. He focused his statement on the role of central authorities established by Member States, elaborating on the requirements and qualities they needed to effectively carry out their duties. He also expressed the view that such central authorities should be able to facilitate the judicial aspects of extradition requests; otherwise, efforts at effective cooperation would be soon frustrated. In conclusion, he pointed out that effective international cooperation in terrorism and in other criminal matters did not threaten national sovereignty, but ensured that it continued to work.

Security Council members stressed that terrorism was one of the greatest threats to international peace and security, and therefore combating it should be one of the priorities of the international community. In that regard, they considered international judicial cooperation to be an essential instrument. Many speakers underscored the need to designate and appoint central authorities to deal with requests for judicial cooperation. Some delegations also warned that terrorists had stepped up the use of technology, which entailed an increasing challenge, and therefore encouraged the international community to strengthen cooperation through the use of information technology. A number of participants considered the new resolution's focus on mutual legal assistance to be critical. Another view was that cooperation with INTERPOL should be increased, and particular attention should be paid to its I-24/7 secure global police communications system. Certain Council members also highlighted the important role that must be played by United Nations specialized agencies, such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and UNODC.

Both the open briefing and the resolution addressed the foreseeable risk of the return of foreign terrorist fighters, magnified by the difficulties in prosecuting them owing to the transnational nature of their crimes. They also addressed the importance of updating international judicial cooperation to match the development of new information and communications technologies. With both actions, the Security Council also underlined the importance of relying on the rule of law and

the judicial systems as a powerful and necessary tool for cooperation among the States in order to tackle international threats to peace and security.

Trafficking of persons in conflict situations

On 20 December, the Security Council held an open debate entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security: trafficking in persons in conflict situations". The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister of Spain, Mariano Rajoy. The Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNODC, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Zainab Hawa Bangura, a civilian activist for the rights of Yazidi women, Ameena Saeed Hasan, and the Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and recent Václav Havel Prize and Sakharov Prize winner, Nadia Murad Basee Taha, briefed the Council.

The Secretary-General referred to trafficking as a global problem, but highlighted that the most vulnerable people were those caught in conflict: women, children, internally displaced persons and refugees. Since the majority of victims were women and girls, he called for the payment of particular attention to their rights and the adoption of gender-sensitive migration policies. He underscored that ISIL, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and others were using trafficking and sexual violence as weapons of terror and as an important source of revenue. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime was, in his view, a vital tool to ensure accountability, and he therefore called on all States to join it, and to adopt dedicated anti-trafficking laws and create specialized prosecutors' offices to address that threat. He also encouraged Member States to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

The Executive Director of UNODC said that building effective action to tackle human trafficking required a strong framework of international cooperation and shared responsibility. In that regard, he highlighted that the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol could serve as a platform for a vast collective response to many of the challenges raised during the open debate. Moreover, he stressed the urgent need for countries to improve identification and referral processes tailored to the challenges of conflict zones and mass movements, and recalled that UNODC was helping Member States to enhance the identification and protection of trafficking victims among refugees and displaced persons fleeing conflict in the Middle East and Africa.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict emphasized the treatment of the issue as a peace and security imperative, including with regard to new and previously unforeseen threats, such as the use of sexual violence as a tactic of terrorism by groups that trafficked their victims internally and across borders in the pursuit of profit. She recalled that her Office had begun to monitor in its reports the trend of groups using sexual violence to advance their military, political, economic and ideological aims, and she named some of the perpetrators operating with absolute impunity. She identified six key indicators under which sexual violence was used as a tactic of terrorism: its commission in a systematic manner integral to the operation; its deliberate use to spread terror; its use to finance and sustain the activities of terrorist groups; its use to target political, ethnic or religious groups; its use to advance a strategy to radicalize, recruit, retain or reward fighters; and its commission pursuant to an ideology of controlling women to produce a generation that could be raised in the image of the organization. She concluded by referring to resolution 2331 (2016) as an important normative development.

A civilian activist for the rights of Yazidi women, Ameena Saeed Hasan, recalled the abduction of more than 6,500 Yazidi women and children in August 2014 by Da'esh. She emphasized that Islam also contained moderate ideas and principles, but expressed regret that some Muslim politicians and religious leaders had remained silent in the face of the activities of the terrorist organization. Furthermore, she underscored that the international community must eradicate terrorism and eliminate its sources of financing, and called for greater accountability.

The Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking and recent Vaclav Havel Prize and Sakharov Prize winner, Nadia Murad Basee Taha, said that since she had testified to the Security Council against the crimes of ISIL in December 2015, the terrorist group's genocidal campaign against Yazidis had continued. Her proposals included ensuring that human traffickers faced punishment for their crimes and contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

Security Council members then proceeded to vote on the draft resolution before them, unanimously adopting resolution 2331 (2016) on trafficking of persons in conflict situations, which was co-sponsored by 60 Member States.

The open debate had 73 speakers, including representatives of 64 Member States. Most welcomed the adoption of the resolution and underscored the need to strengthen relationships among the various agencies concerned in the fight against trafficking of persons in conflict situations, including UNODC, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Some mentioned that the General Assembly should be the primary body of the United Nations when dealing with the issue. Many delegations recognized the vulnerability of refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons. There were also mentions of the linkage between trafficking of persons and other transnational organized criminal activities, such as money laundering, drug trafficking and terrorism. The need to tackle the issue in an integrated and comprehensive manner was also emphasized. The need to ensure proper accountability for those responsible for those crimes was frequently emphasized.

Tribute to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

On 14 December, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2324 (2016) as a tribute to outgoing Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Turkey terrorist attacks

On 11 December, the Security Council issued a press statement condemning in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack that took place in the city of Istanbul, Turkey, on 10 December, during which at least 39 people were killed and 155 were injured.

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Security Council

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Identical letters dated 28 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to express Israel's strong condemnation of Iran's continued ballistic missile tests and repeated violations of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).

According to new information that has recently come to light, on 15 November 2016, Iran conducted a clandestine launch test of the Qiam medium-range missile, which is a Missile Technology Control Regime category one ballistic missile, capable of delivering a nuclear payload of 700 kg over a range of more than 750 km.

The intended target for this test was none other than a Star of David, the symbol of the Jewish people. Please find attached a satellite photograph, which shows the target and the crater indicating the impact of the missile (see annex). Such use of the Star of David as target practice is hateful and unacceptable.

The missile launch is not only a direct violation of resolution 2231 (2015) but also clear evidence of Iran's continued intention to harm the State of Israel.

Iran conveyed similar intentions with its most recent missile launches, which were conducted on 18 and 19 June 2017. Under the pretext of targeting ISIS positions, Iran fired six Zulfiqar surface-to-surface missiles and one Qiam medium-range missile at the Dayr al-Zawr region in Syria.

Like the Qiam, the Zulfiqar is also a Missile Technology Control Regime category one ballistic missile. The Zulfiqar missile is capable of delivering a nuclear payload of 500 kg over a range of 700 km.

Following the launches in June 2017, which were allegedly part of the fight against ISIS, Sheikh Hussein al-Islam, an adviser to Iran's Foreign Minister, made Iran's true objective clear by stating: "Israel is the main enemy of Iran. I think [Israel] understood the message ... It now has to worry."

The test firing of these ballistic missiles constitutes yet another flagrant violation of resolution 2231 (2015), which was intended to restrict Iran from launching missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

The development of surface-to-surface missiles with nuclear warhead capability reveals Iran's true intentions not to comply with resolution 2231 (2015).

The Security Council must not shy away from its responsibility to ensure Iran's full compliance with the relevant resolutions, especially on the eve of the briefing on non-proliferation, which will take place on 29 June 2017. The Council

also cannot ignore such blatant threats by one State Member of the United Nations towards another.

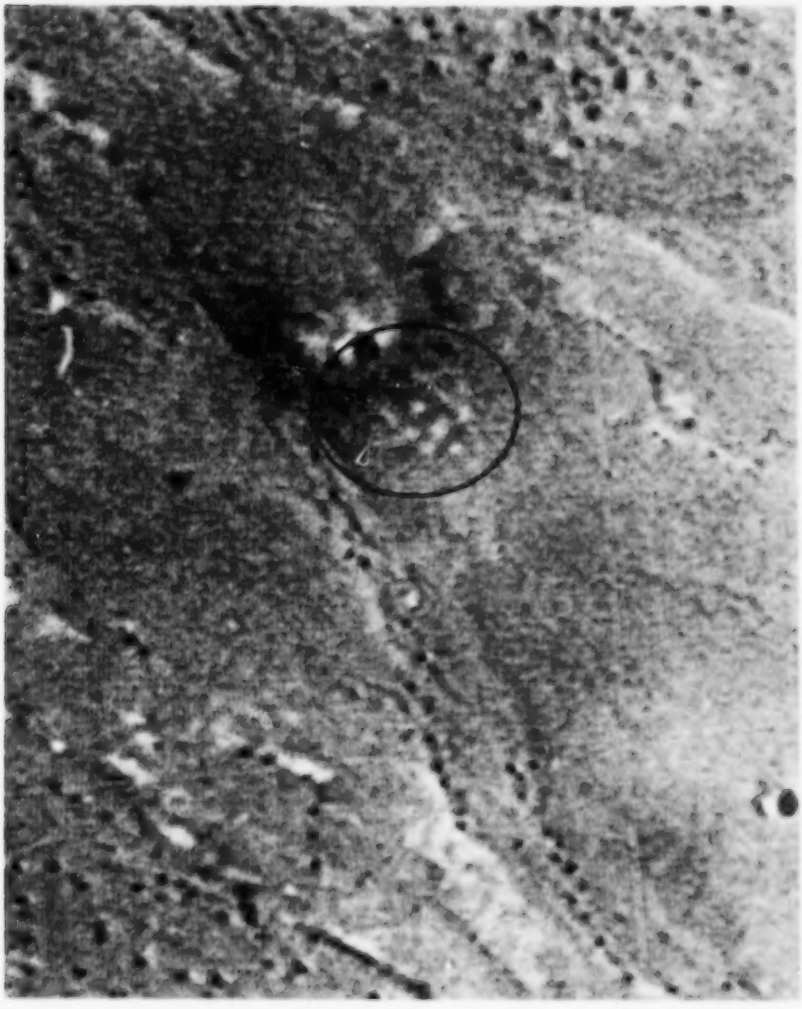
Iran continues to ignore its obligations to the international community and to develop its aggressive capabilities, which pose a threat to Israel and to the whole region.

Iran's ballistic missile programme must be stopped. I call upon the Security Council to respond firmly and decisively to these Iranian violations and provocations.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the identical letters dated 28 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council



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